# PACESETTER

#4

$9.95

## The George Perez Magazine

**INTERVIEWS WITH**
**Carol Flynn**
**Marv Wolfman**
**Phil Jimenez**

**TITANS Checklist**
**Art • Trivia • News**

FOR PÉREZ FANS • • BY PÉREZ FANS

# PACESETTER
## The George Pérez Magazine

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*and George Pérez!*

## IN THIS ISSUE

LETTER FROM TONY ..... page 2
THE REAL NUMBER ONE FAN, *by Carol Flynn* ..... page 3
THE NEW TEEN CUSTOM TITANS, *by George Gustines* ..... page 7
INTERVIEW WITH PHIL JIMENEZ ..... page 9
My First Time, *by Dennis Secrest* ..... page14
FOCUS ON: TITANS OBSCURA, *by Bobby Nash* ..... page16
PÉREZ FANS AROUND THE WORLD ..... page20
PHOTO GALLERY ..... page22
INTERVIEW WITH MARV WOLFMAN ..... page23
THE NEW TEEN TITANS AND YOU, *by Joe Grunenwald* ..... page25
A FAN'S VIEWPOINT, *by Leo Whitman* ..... page28
QUESTION OF THE ISSUE ..... page31
TITANS CHECKLIST ..... page34
INTERVIEW WITH SAM REGISTER, *by Bill Walko* ..... page39
INTERVIEW WITH GLEN MURAKAMI, *by Bill Walko* ..... page42
THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR, *by Bill Walko* ..... page46
GEORGE PÉREZ ART GALLERY ..... page50
GEORGE PÉREZ TRIBUTE GALLERY ..... page70
NEWS AND EVENTS ..... page78
LETTER COLUMN ..... page79

*Special thanks to Rich Bernatovech for providing the stunning cover art for this issue!*

**We are always on the lookout for articles and copies of artwork and photos for forthcoming issues. If you are able to provide art, articles, or both, you can earn a discount or a free copy!**

**What's coming in the next issue of PACESETTER? It looks like issue five will either be dedicated to George's run on WONDER WOMAN. George revamped the entire mythos of Diana of Themiscyra.**

**NEXT ISSUE'S QUESTION:**
What do you feel was George Pérez's contribution to making WONDER WOMAN a success? What did he do that others didn't?

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# PACESETTER
## The George Pérez Magazine

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FOR PÉREZ FANS • • BY PÉREZ FANS

## F•R•O•M T•H•E P•U•B•L•I•S•H•E•R

When someone brings up The New Teen Titans, the first thought that comes to mind is Marv and George. It's kind of like when you think of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby you think of the Fantastic Four, Ditko Spider Man, Byrne X-Men, Miller Daredevil, etc... The New Teen Titans is one of those special series that even though it has been twenty years since the first issue came out, fans still talk about the series like it was one of those hot new series that just came out. The New Teen Titans was like my version of a soap opera back then. While I enjoyed other comics, NTT was the book that I would count the days until the next issue would come out. I had wish it was a weekly comic. I just couldn't get enough!

A panel from Avengers/JLA #4 featuring, among others, Cyborg, Raven, Jericho, Risk and Wonder Girl of the Titans.

It all really had to do with Marv and George's very special relationship. From the countless interviews I've read over the years, the only other creative team that I think comes close to their synergy are Lee and Kirby. To me it almost seems that Marv and George could read each other's minds. Each knew exactly what the other wanted to bring to the stories. Each brought their own individual ideas and thoughts to the stories. I'm sure there were some heated disagreements during their run, but I'm sure in the end that brought out some even better stories and character development.

More than any other comic, the characters seemed so real—each having their own individual personalities. I think that is the main enduring quality of The New Teen Titans. There have been tons of all-out actions comics over the years, but the comics that people tend to remember are character-driven comics like the Teen Titans.

George as professional in the comic industry grew in confidence and talent more in his tenure on the Teen Titans than any other series, from his pencils, inks, co-plotting to being co-editor. The Teen Titans of the 1980s will always be one of my very favorites of all time. This issue of Pacesetter celebrates what Marv and George's Teen Titans are all about, from the past, present and the future.

I want to thank everyone that has contributed to this issue. The excitement level of the contributors was a step higher than even the Avengers/JLA issue, which I didn't think could be topped. Marcus asked me if he could take the reigns of this issue. I would have been crazy to say no! As usual, Marcus has done another bang up job. This issue is our best issue yet, but I'll let our readers be the final judge. Please drop us a line on your thoughts and opinions of this issue.

Remember I'm also always looking for contributors. E-mail or snail-mail me for details.

A very special thanks this issue goes out to Bill Walko. Without his tireless efforts—from research, artwork to editing help—this issue would not be anywhere near as good as it has turned out. That is why the contributors are so important to Pacesetter. Like I've said before, the magazine is only as good as the contributors. I thank everyone that has—big and small. The more contributors the merrier.

~ Tony Lorenz

## TRIVIA

Be on the lookout for the Pointing Hand or the Exclamation Mark throughout this issue for little known facts and amazing trivia!

# THE REAL NUMBER ONE FAN

*By Carol Flynn*

Carol Flynn, wife of the world's greatest living artist. Perhaps there is more to her than that. When George and I first met I was working as a secretary at a consulting firm in Manhattan. Although he was not aware of it at the time, I thought he would be very important in my life (good instinct I'd say). We did not meet again for several months but when we did it was all downhill for George, as I had decided that we should be together for all time. Fortunately, he seemed to be quite receptive to the idea and we were married in June of 1981. Prior to our marriage I was a white-collar worker with hobbies that included sewing, dancing, reading and occasional sketching. After our marriage I was no longer required to "earn a living" outside our home so I changed my focus from work to the arts.

John Mundt asked how George's art influenced mine. Ironically, once I saw George's artwork I gave up sketching permanently. It was just too humiliating. That is not to say that he ever denigrated my efforts or discouraged me. Quite the contrary, George has been nothing but supportive to any endeavor of mine. As I was a ballroom dancer when we met, he encouraged me to take more lessons and compete as long as I enjoyed it. His was always the loudest voice cheering me on and telling me I was the best one on the dance floor no matter what the results (I did quite well in the pro/am division). John also wanted to know if my art has influenced George's. That is not as easy to say. As a sewer and very fashion conscious person I was very influential in getting bell-bottom, hip-hugger pants out of the wardrobes of female characters in the 1980's (they are back in style again now so they may be showing up once more), but beyond fashion advice I had little to offer. When I did offer suggestions ("why not make it more simple") he generally agreed in theory but can only draw in his own style which is quite detailed.

John also asks if George and I work in the same space, and does that result in any advantages or conflicts? We do not. There are many reasons for that which is the answer to the conflicts question. Because George is scrupulous about research for his work he needs copious amounts of reference material which occupies a large part of his studio. My sewing is also very space consuming so we could not easily fit in the same space. On the other hand, my dancing requires a large area free of obstacles, which also keeps us in separate areas. Both of us feel that the use of individual studios (in the same house) gives us enough of our own space to make us appreciate the time that we do spend together. As he works in our house and I stay at home, George figures that we have spent about three times as much time together as the average couple and we are still very happy together after almost twenty-three years of marriage.

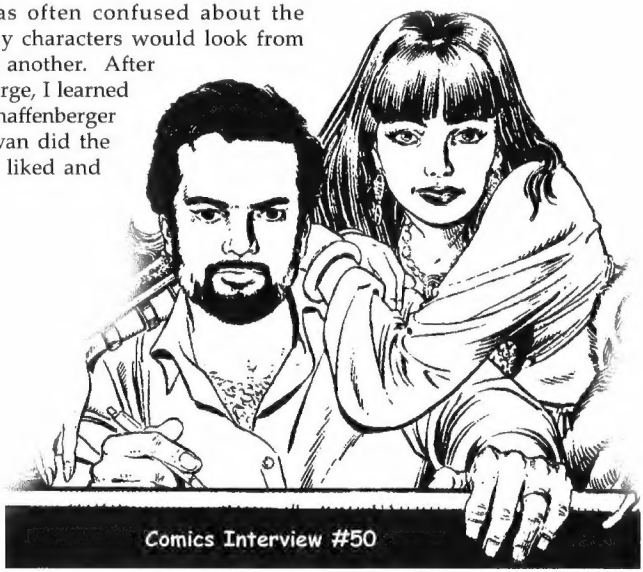
George Gustines wants to know what comics I read. Sorry to let everyone down, but I don't read comics. This ties in with Bill Walko's questions regarding my knowledge of comics before meeting George and how he influenced my opinion. When I was about 12 I started reading DC comics including Lois Lane, Superman, Action, and Adventure. My favorite characters were the females, although they were not portrayed in a very flattering light. Kurt Schaffenberger's work on Lois Lane and Lana Lang was my favorite. Supergirl and the Legion of Superheroes also intrigued me. Back then, things were pretty different both in comics and in the real world. In the real world, comics were available in candy stores (does anyone out there even remember what a candy store was?), magazine racks in stores and by subscription. As I could not afford a subscription I could only buy comics when I had some of my allowance left and I happened

to be in a shop when there was a cover I did not already have. The regular books were 10 cents and the Annuals were a quarter. Comics started to change about the same time that I decided makeup and accessories were more fun. This was just about the time when stories stopped being self contained and it became necessary to find a way to get consecutive issues which I was not able to do.

When George and I went out on our first date he brought along pages of the Teen Titans issue that he was working on at the time, Issue #8. It was a revelation to me because in my youthful innocence I had always thought that comics were made from stamps (like rubber stamps) due to the simplistic nature of the artwork. Needless to say, George's style was unlike anything I had ever seen. He may have been less than thrilled by my lack of knowledge but I guess he got over it. Did he ever tell you that on our first date I loaned him $20 because he did not have any cash to pay for our meal or to buy a subway token to get home? It wasn't that he was broke, but he had a paycheck in his pocket that he hadn't cashed. We always laugh about that one. Every year on the anniversary of our first date, he gives me $20.

The fact that I enjoyed comics in my youth allows me to understand how George's fans feel now. Back then the artists often did not even get credit for their work. Because of this I was often confused about the different way characters would look from one book to another. After meeting George, I learned that Kurt Schaffenberger and Curt Swan did the books that I liked and that Wayne Boring had the unique style that I remembered. Even if I do not especially like the styles of every artist in the field now, I certainly respect the amount of work that is involved in producing a comic. No one asked but my favorite artist is George Pérez. And to clear up all the confusion, I am George's number one fan so all of the rest of the fans who keep telling him that they are just have to step back to number two!

With regard to fandom and conventions: When we were first married I accompanied George to quite a few conventions. It was our intention that these would be mini-vacations that wouldn't cost us much. The reality is that when George goes to a convention he works the entire time. When he isn't on the convention floor sketching, autographing and answering questions/posing for pictures, he is in the room sketching or networking with other professionals. After spending numerous weekends in hotel rooms waiting for George to pick me up to go out to dinner with more comic people, I realized that my time might be better spent at home working on my own projects and that it would be worth the money paid to go on a vacation where George was not surrounded by work. The oddest experience happened in Texas where a young fan came in with a briefcase full of comics handcuffed to his wrist.



In the early years of our marriage, I was a bit surprised by the devotion the fans have both for the characters and the artists. It is not in my nature to get that involved with my entertainment, but I do understand that everyone is different. Over the years I have observed many fans and professionals in many situations and I think that George is very deserving of the adulation he receives. In answer to Andy Mangels' questions about Hollywood wife syndrome, I am not sure that I know what that means. My favorite anecdote revolves around an experience that occurs to this day. When I meet people and they ask what my husband does, I tell them he is a well-known comic book artist. Some details follow, but I do not try to puff myself up based on George. The funny part is when they see me again after speaking to spouse/sibling/neighbor/you fill in the blank, they or someone will ask me with reverence: "Do you know who you are married to? Do you sit and watch him draw all day long?" Let's put an end to the mystery, yes, I am pretty sure I know who I married. No, I don't sit and watch him draw all day long, sorry.

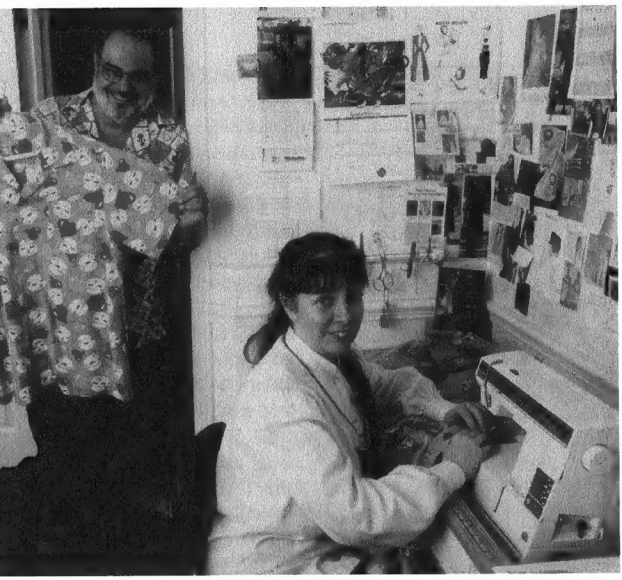
John Mundt asked if there is a secret organization of spouses and I am afraid that if there is, they didn't invite me to be a member. Frequently, at events some of us will be thrown together by chance. This is usually because we don't know enough about comics to be fun for the fans to talk to and we end up commiserating with each other. Certainly, we want to be there and support our heroes, but it is impossible to fake the level of interest that fans come by naturally. Bill Walko asked about my appearance in some of George's work. It is quite flattering that George wanted to use me as a character and I had no problem with it. My approval was not an issue because I trust him never to show me in a bad light. John, if I could have any superpower it would be the ability to look young and buff and still be able to eat anything I want. Maybe I should have said I would like to be able to provide world peace, but I guess I'm just not that wonderful.

In answer to Marcus regarding the shirts I make for George this is the story. I have always enjoyed sewing. In the 1960s and '70s I taught myself to sew in order to save money and get clothes that fit better

MISS BANU, THESE GOWNS YOU DESIGNED LOOK SO BEAUTIFUL.
IT'S PHOENICIA. NOW REMEMBER, STAND STRAIGHT AS YOU WALK AND YOU WILL ALL BE MAGNIFICENT.
NOW, WHERE'S THE BRIDE?

Tales of the Teen Titans #50, page 12 (Feb. 1985)

A portrait of Carol by George, from the late 80's



than ready to wear. Like many endeavors, the more you learn the more you realize you don't know so I started taking classes and improving my skills. Among other things I can make my own patterns, but sometimes it is easier to alter a commercial pattern than make one from scratch. In the case of George's shirts I started with a commercial pattern by McCall's. At first, I was not sure that George would like to wear something "homemade" but when he assured me that he would I proceeded. As you may know, George is a big guy and it isn't always easy to find a large selection of clothes in non-standard sizes. What started as an attempt to get some variety in shirts that would fit well became a long term project to find more exotic and fun fabrics to live up to a reputation that we never actively sought. The favorite shirt with fans so far is a lavender background with Lamb Chop and balloons. I do not make the fabrics; they are all purchased from fabric shops. The secret is to check in the sale fabrics and the children's departments to get the quirky fabrics that make the shirts so unique.

Your question about what makes me an artist is very thought provoking. George often says how much he respects my talent and it always makes me stop and think because I do not feel especially talented or artistic. Pushed to answer I think that my real talent is dancing. What makes me different from other people who dance is that when I hear music I am compelled to express it with movement because I don't just hear it, I also feel it. The same need to share a feeling is expressed in the sewing of George's shirts. Both sewing and dancing are skills that can be learned and done by anyone. I guess the same could be true for drawing, but some people are gifted to be able to take the skill and transform it in ways that the rest of us can only admire. It is nice that George and I both have the ability to work at things that we truly enjoy and can support each other without any unpleasant competitiveness. We enjoy many activities and things that we can share such as travel, theater, movies old and new, and friends so we don't get bored or boring.

Since this is really my first interview as George's wife I tried not to ramble and to answer the questions to the best of my ability. The most important question should always be saved for last and that is what I have done. Marcus asked: "Broccoli: love it or hate it." My answer is, I love broccoli, also brussels sprouts, cabbage, rutabagas, and turnips. Of those, the only one on the list that George likes is broccoli. It is just as important to have differences as similarities.

This was fun!

Carol

(Part of a 50th anniversary wedding

# THE NEW TEEN CUSTOM TITANS

*by George Gustines*

I suffer from a triple malady: I am a fan of the Justice League, the Titans and George Pérez.

It all started with my first comic book: Justice League of America 200. A boy couldn't ask for a better introduction to the world of DC Comics: wall-to-wall heroes and a plot that has proven classic – the new heroes battling the old guard. And the art! Seeing the heroes go head-to-head was great (all those splash pages!), but seeing the team assembled was tremendous.

Soon thereafter I was introduced to a relatively new team called The New Teen Titans. I wasn't aware of the credit boxes when I picked up my first Titans ("Dear Mom and Dad"), but as fate would have it, George Pérez was part of the magic for both books. Ever since, I've been hooked on the Titans, the Justice League and George Pérez art.

Flash forward about 20 years and the debut of the incredible line of DC Direct action figures. I loved them, especially since the first three – Swamp Thing, Sandman and Wonder Woman – seemed to indicate that any DC character could become an action figure. But that also meant that I would have to limit my purchases – otherwise my wallet would be empty and my apartment would look like a comic store (which my partner would surely object to). So my big decision? I would get all Titans-related figures and any Leaguer who appeared in JLA 200. Mature, right?

Unfortunately, as DC Direct progressed, it seemed like some characters might not get their chance to shine. Would Elongated Man get a figure? Why hasn't Firestorm been made? And what about the Titans? What were the chances of a Bumblebee figure? Or a Hawk and Dove and Dove deluxe set?

In turmoil, I turned to shopping. Every so often on e-Bay, I spotted auctions for custom action figures of every stripe. There was one guy (Scott Kolowski) whose figures tempted me to break my "Titans/JLA 200 ONLY" rule. (Oh how I wanted that Vixen! Oh how I'm embarrassed that I wanted that El Dorado custom!) I bid and bid and bid on his Elongated Man custom, but I didn't win. But all was not lost

At the suggestion of a friend, I e-mailed Scott and said that I would love to commission some figures. Much to my surprise – and I hope, not to his regret – he said yes. He's met every challenge (Golden Eagle) with flying colors. I think it helps that he's as big a fan of the DC Universe as I am. I doubt there is room to show all the figures he's created for me, but here's some details about my collection:

TITANS WEST, REVISITED: I try not to play favorites, but this set of figures continues to take my breath away. Bumblebee and Flamebird were once Phantom Lady, one of most adaptable of the DC Direct ladies. I think that Herald (John Stewart/GL) is better as a figure than he was in the comics. Golden Eagle (Owlman) is simply superb.

VILLAINY, INC: Blackfire was thanks to the extra Starfire from the Titans 5-pack. It was a great addition since Titans villains seemed unlikely. (The latest news, of course, is that

2004 will see Blackfire, Deathstroke, Brother Blood and the new Trickster figures). I hedged my bets with Terra (Tulip), who I think will be made, but when? Hawk (Johnny Quick) looks cool, though he was slightly injured in transportation and from falling over once or twice.

IN MEMORY: Dove (Phantom Lady) has slight injuries (see Hawk above), but still cuts a fine figure. (I know she's alive again, but it throws off my groupings.) One of my favorite details about Kole (Tulip) is how Scott interpreted her cape. Lilith (Lang Lang) is slightly off scale (which is a general problem for DC Direct), but she looks good next to Robin and the shorter Titans. Troia (Phantom Lady) was needed as part of my "Big Seven" Titans display. I limited myself to three incarnations of each character, otherwise I'd need a few more Donnas (Wonder Girl, Troia, Darkstar, original Troia costume).

TWO TERRIFIC TWOSOMES: Pantha (Cheetah) is simply stunning and Tempest (Cosmic Boy) has been a favorite since Garth grew up into the role. Getting back to my other obsession, once I realized that the Pocket Heroes had done most of the Leaguers from 200, I went on shopping frenzy to claim them all. Still, that left me with Zatanna (Saturn Girl) and Elongated Man (Cosmic Boy) that were missing. Enter Scott. (I would get him to customize a Firestorm and Elongated man, but they are on the way from DC Direct this year.)

COMING SOON: Also on the way from DC Direct are the Young Justice Titans and Brother Blood, so that changed my next batch from Scott. After tinkering, I decided it was time for Cheshire (Saturn Girl), Trident (Mirror Master), Kestrel (Johnny Quick), Jesse Quick (Phantom Lady), Magenta (Saturn Girl) and Red Star (Hal Jordan/Spectre).

IN THE FUTURE: By my calculations (an article in itself, to explain my reasoning), there are about sixty-four heroic members of the Titans family. Thankfully, there are about fourteen Titans I would not go out of my way to commission (my apologies to fans of the Jurgens Titans). But with any luck, Scott will one day work his magic on Dove I, Thunder and Lightning, Harlequin, Damage, Red Star I, Jericho, Argent and Captain Marvel Jr., Phantasm and Wildebeest, Azrael, Aquagirl, Flamebird II, Dr. Light and, because I'm a Raven fan—the evil-leather-wearing-Raven from The New Titans #100.

George Gustines (GusNYT@aol.com) tries his hardest to write on comics for his employer—*The New York Times*. He also edited *The Sentinels*, an original graphic novel about a second-generation super-hero team.

Scott Kolowski is reachable at skolowski@yahoo.com. You can also visit his website (with pictures of tons of custom figures) at: http://www.mhonline.net/~skolo/toys.htm

# INTERVIEW WITH PHIL JIMENEZ

*January 2004*

(Photo courtesy of Comics Unlimited www.comicsunlimited.com)

As a group project, several people contributed to the interview questions, as with Carol Flynn's interview. In Phil's interview, each question is prefaced by the initials of those who asked it. Bill Walko (of www.titanstower.com) is BW, John Mundt (of *Adventures of Monkey* comic, http://worldofmonkeyproductions.homestead.com/Who.html) is JM, Valancy Gilliam is VG, George Gustines is GG, and Marcus Mébes is MM.

*BW: When did you first discover George Pérez?*

Bill, I was first exposed to George Pérez art—and forever influenced by it—when I was 13, in junior high. A friend introduced me to *The New Teen Titans*—specifically, issue #12, the Clash of the Titans issue—and from then on I was hooked. There was something magical to me about Pérez, about his sense of design, his approach to character and layout—and it must have impacted me on a deep, almost subliminal level, for it's influenced me ever since.

*BW: George's art has obviously had an impact on your style; How conscious were you of that when you first began comics professionally? (see George Gustines' related question below)*

Oh, I was very conscious of it—for better or worse, when I worked on a "world" that George had worked on—like that of the Titans or Wonder Woman, I tried to capture the essence, the spirit of his work there, because I believed it was part of the magic that drew me to those projects in the first place.

*BW: Do you have a favorite work of George Pérez? Something he did that holds a special place for you?*

*Crisis on Infinite Earths*, *Wonder Woman* #18-24, and the Mindi Mayer will reading from *Wonder Woman Annual* #1, remain my favorite works of George. I'm obsessed with them. Ultimately, I'm a huge fan of his entire Wonder Woman, although I wished he would have drawn more of it—and, I think, his pencils on *Infinity Gauntlet* are among his very best, in terms of the actual drawing.

*BW: What was it like meeting George for the first time? Where and when did that happen?*

I was once in an elevator with George and didn't know it; I was 19 and had just moved to NYC and was visiting DC Comics for the first time. I met him years later, at an Eisner Awards Ceremony, I believe. We were both nominated—me for penciling, and him for inking! He called me "son"!

*BW: Your style has evolved and grown since you first started, yet people still cite the Pérez similarities. Do you find that irksome? Or complimentary? Or both?*

Well, any similarities I find flattering. As everyone knows, I wouldn't have a career without George's influence on my work. George's art is one of the single most important aspects of my art and my approach to comics and storytelling. My hope has always been to fur-

ther a sensibility, an approach, a way of working, that I find important and influential in the business. Working the way George and I do is not easy—and I think it's harder to do what we do than other kinds of comic art (and, if not harder, certainly more time consumptive).

What I do find troublesome is when people don't take the time to note the differences between my work and George's, and there are LOTS. We ink very differently, we draw figures very differently—our approach to many things is actually quite different. The surface of my work is similar to his because of the influence, but I think it's too easy for reviewers to remark on that. I think if they dug deeper, they'd see the different paths George and I have taken as arts.

*BW: Your first major assignment was* Team Titans. *How did that feel to work on characters you loved reading as a fan?*

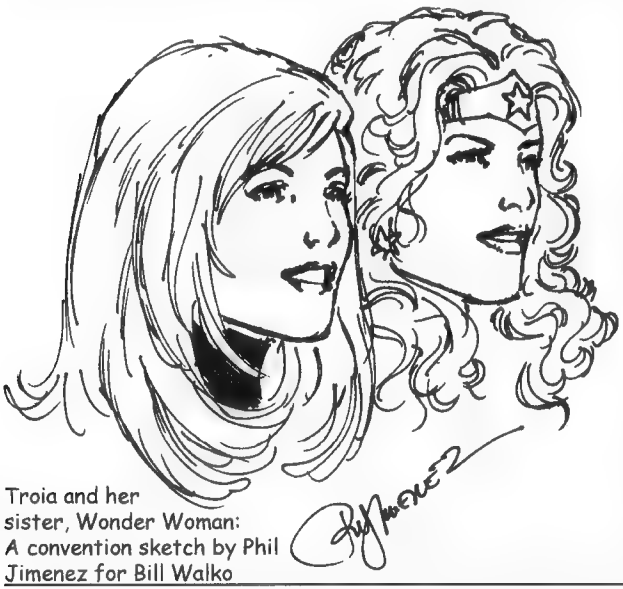
*Team Titans* was a mixed bag for me; I was still learning a lot about storytelling and anatomy, so there's some wonky stuff going on there. And, of course, there are my later, legendary battles with DC editorial over the direction of the book, which tainted the experience for me. But drawing Donna Troy is always a treat. I'm just sad we couldn't play the characters and the book in a different way with a less hostile editorial reign.

*BW: How did you approach the characters? Did you mimic George's version of the Titans characters?*

The strange thing is, there are certain characters that George has drawn over the years, like several of the Titans and Wonder Woman, that are so burned into my head as "THE" archetypal versions that it's nearly impossible for me to see them anyway else. George is a master of creating specific faces, body types, and body language for his characters. That sort of imprint is hard to get out of my head, and therefore, my approach to characters he's so seamlessly defined will be more like his. However, when I'm drawing characters George is not known for, like *The Authority,* say, or various Vertigo characters, my approach is much less influenced by his work and probably much more "mine".

*BW: Donna Troy is apparently a favorite of yours. What was it like drawing her in the pages of* Team Titans?

It was better drawing her in *Wonder Woman,* when she had powers, a focus, and a function! I never liked that they depowered Donna or gave her a baby or moved her to the farm. I've always enjoyed her as a proactive adventurer, and I really enjoyed working with her on *Wonder Woman,* where I could "protect" her. Fans seemed to love her there, too, and *Wizard* even nominated Donna as a Best Supporting Character during my WW run.




Troia and her sister, Wonder Woman: A convention sketch by Phil Jimenez for Bill Walko

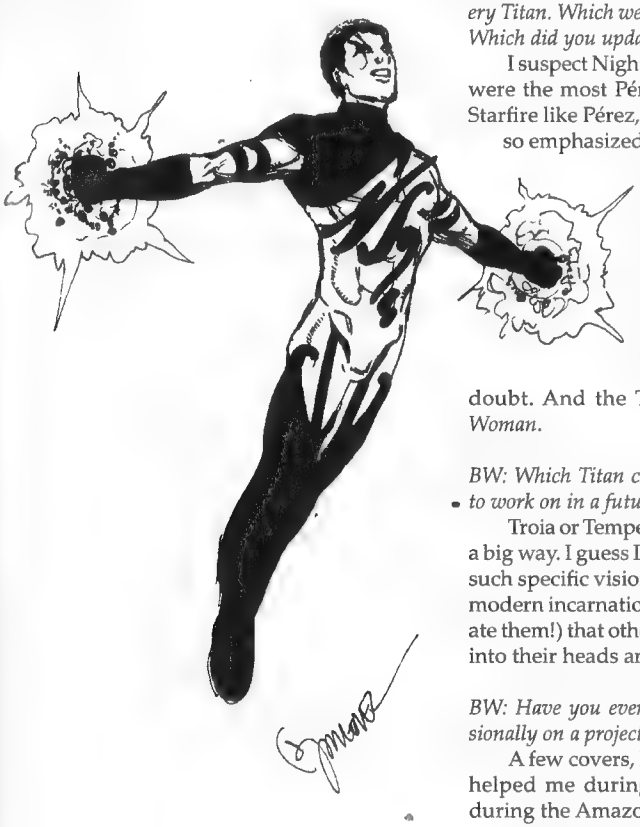
*BW: George had very distinct faces for the Titans characters. Do you still use that reference when you draw them? Or have they evolved to a more 'Phil Jimenez' version of the characters?*

Donna has evolved into a more "Phil Jimenez" version of the character, although her body language is probably very similar. Wonder Woman was similar, but with other traits filtering in, which created a George-like version, but definitely not the same. I suspect most of the characters have evolved into something else under

my pen; I think it's impossible not to. You can't simply copy someone else's work. All your other influences and talents come into the mix, turning it into something of your own, even if there's obvious influence from someone like George.

*BW: You've redesigned two major Titans characters: Tempest and Troia. Let's talk about Tempest first: How did you go about his redesign?*

I simply wanted to pay homage to the Aquaman design that my boyfriend Neal Pozner had created, the famous blue and white costume. I altered the pattern and made it black and red. It was actually a very simple redesign; unfortunately, no other artist has really taken the time to learn the pattern, so it doesn't quite work as well under other illustrators!



*BW: Now Troia. You really combined a number of her different looks into one streamlined version. How did you decide what elements you wanted to include?*

I simply took what I perceived where the best elements of her previous costumes, combined them with an Emma Peel catsuit (Donna is in fashion, and would have a keen fashion sense, I believe), and out came the costume. Not unlike Tempest, however, very few artists seemed to understand the way that costume worked, and it never really shone except for the times I drew it. It was very fashion-oriented and pieces like the belt and necklace were decorative, which I think threw many people off. And it should never have had highlights, ever. It should always have been solid black with stars.

*BW: In JLA/Titans, you had the chance to draw every Titan. Which were the most Pérez-influenced? Which did you update, or put your own spin on?*

I suspect Nightwing and Troia and Starfire were the most Pérez influenced; I still draw Starfire like Pérez, with the round features he so emphasized. Later characters like Rose Wilson and Mirage were mine to develop, and were less influenced, if at all, by George's work.

*BW: What has been your favorite Titans project to work on?*

*JLA/Titans*, without a doubt. And the Troia back ups in *Wonder Woman*.

*BW: Which Titan character would you most like to work on in a future project?*

Troia or Tempest. They both need fixing, in a big way. I guess I take some pride in creating such specific visions of these characters (their modern incarnations, obviously—I didn't create them!) that others have a hard time getting into their heads and writing them.

*BW: Have you ever worked with George professionally on a project?*

A few covers, here and there; and George helped me during my *Wonder Woman* run, during the Amazon Civil War story.

*BW: What capacity would you like to work with George, if you had the choice?*

I'd love to work with him in any capacity, really! As a fellow artist or writer!

*BW: If you could work with George Pérez on a Titans project, what would you like it to be?*

Something Donna Troy related, for sure.

*GG: Early on, it seemed your art style was modeled on George Pérez. Have you had a hard time stepping away from the perception? (see question above)*

This was answered above, I think!

*GG: When you draw the Titans, they seem to "look" like the Pérez Titans. When you draw other team books, like the X-Men, is there a particular look you're trying to capture?*

Generally, a "classic" look, I think. A look for the characters that reads to me as "correct". I try not to hyper-stylize characters in a way that they don't read as "right", if that makes any sense. So I refer to the artists who I think most define a set of characters—John Byrne on the classic X-Men, Bryan Hitch on the Authority, George on the classic Titans—and try to capture the "essence" of their visions. In George's case, that meant a much heavier influence than the others, because his art speaks to me on such a deep, personal level.

*JM: With which Titan do you most identify? With which do you least identify?*

I most identify with Donna Troy. Always have, from the time I was 13 on. Except for the Terry thing!

I probably least identify with Arsenal—his character is completely counter to my sensibilities. Devin Grayson so clearly defined his character, made him so real—and he's someone I doubt I could EVER get along with.

*JM: What was your first paying illustration job? How much did it pay?*

Gosh—I really don't remember! I'm horrified. My first paying work at DC was in special projects, doing ink work... but I don't remember the pay! It got me fed, that's for sure!

*JM: If you could have one superpower, what would it be, and why would you want it?*

High-scale telekinesis, because with it you can mimic so many other powers.

*MM: Back when you drew (inked) some issues of the second series of* Teen Titans *(Atom's Team), your work showed an EXCEPTIONAL attention to detail and style, which I've only seen equaled in some of your issues of* Wonder Woman. *Did you have any special affinity for the characters?*

I only inked those Titans issues, actually, over Dan Jurgens' layouts. I always got a kick out of Prysm and Fringe—but never really clicked with that team.

*MM: In JLA/Titans your work showed equal depth and range. Were there any characters you DIDN'T care for?*

There are characters I don't like, but there are very few I don't like drawing. As a matter of fact, characters like Arsenal and Beast Boy,

whom I don't love, I love to draw—because I love the challenge of capturing the essence of them and putting them on paper. I think it's just lazy storytelling and artmaking, folks who don't give respect to all the characters they're working on, if they like them or not.

*MM: And why, WHY did that other artist finish up the last pages of the third issue? It was like going from eating the smoothest, creamiest Belgian chocolate to biting down on a bitter, rancid piece of moldy leather. Were there time constraints, or was it an editorial decision in order to introduce the then-new series' artist?*

It was, indeed, an editorial decision to introduce the new series' artist.

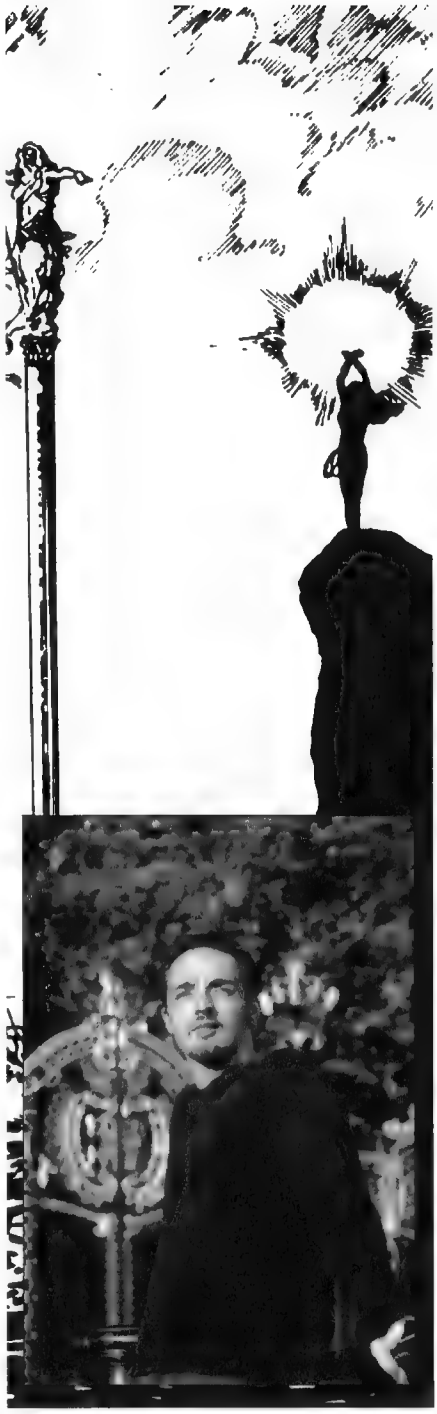
*MM: Will you be working on any Titans-related projects anytime soon? Perhaps a TROIA mini-series or back-up series? Her death in the* Graduation Day *mini-series is viewed by many as pointless, and as you noted earlier, you have a special feel for her character that others have not been able to capture.*

That would be lovely, wouldn't it?

*MM: I've noticed certain characteristics of characters drawn by George Pérez and by you. A lot of characters showing indecision in Pérez art tend to bite their bottom lip (like Donna did a lot in the "Who is Donna Troy Issue" of* New Teen Titans *#38. I've noticed the "elbow-up-with-hand-behind-neck" in a lot of your art. It's not annoying, per se, but it's something that I have been picking up on a lot lately. Are you aware of this? (Silly question, I know, but it might be worth an answer, huh?)*

I am, actually! It's something I often do when I'm thinking. I'm one of those people that does a lot of physical acting when I'm drawing characters, to see what it feels like to do certain movements. I guess that's something I just imprint on characters (although I learned to grasp my face with my hand, and still draw it sometimes, from reading George's work!).

*MM: Thanks for taking the time to answer these Phil! I hope you like the issue! :)*



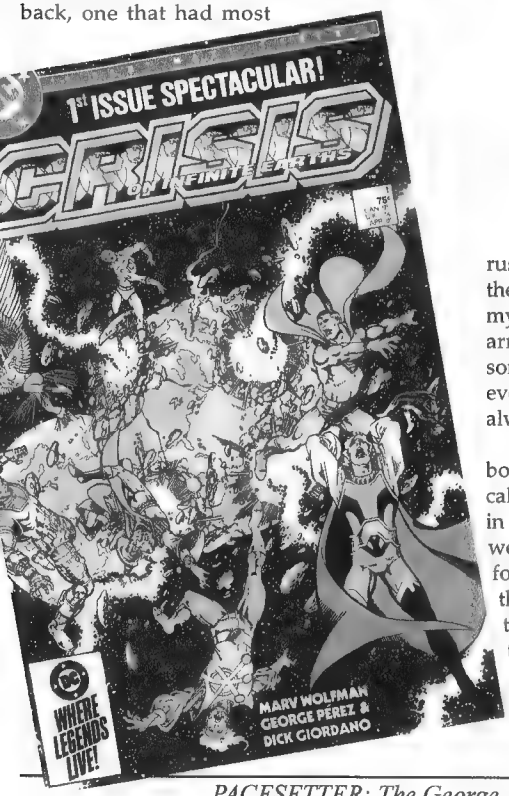
# MY FIRST TIME

*by Dennis Secrest*

It was during the summer of 1989, a time for kids to be running and shouting at the top of their lungs, a time of sunshine and swimming at the beach or in my case, a time for other worlds.

I stayed every summer at my grandmother's house, my father's mother putting me up and feeding me for three long months so my dad didn't have to pay for babysitters. I was twelve at the time, a scrawny kid that was silent most of the time and really didn't do very much but read. After lunch, my grandmother would put me out so she could watch the soaps without any distractions. Angry for being forced outside, I snuck into the basement, a place full of forbidden danger and unknown excitement.

I could smell the age of the wood, feel the cool air as it rushed past me as I opened the door. Old furniture littered the main storage room but there was another door in the back, one that had most



THE NEW TEEN TITANS
HERE, NAME IS BLACKFIRE! SHE'S PRINCESS KORYAND'R'S SISTER--
--AND SHE'S CROSSED A UNIVERSE TO DESTROY THE TEEN TITANS!
WHERE THE ACTION IS!

of its paint chipped off while the rust crawled up the metal pins that held it to the doorframe. My feet carried me to that door; my right hand twisted the knob while both my arms heaved the door open. Inside was not something that Robert Louis Stevenson had ever written about but it was a treasure I had always dreamed of.

What stood before me were boxes upon boxes of comic books, or as my Grandma called them, "funny books," but they weren't in boxes you see comics in today. The boxes were like giant U-Haul ones that you bought for moving to another state and they had these great tarps of clear plastic protecting them from dust. My eyes glowed, my hands trembled and I could already hear the sounds of ray guns going off around me. I knew my father had collected comics in his youth and up through his young adult

years but had quit abruptly a year or so ago with something he had called the "Crisis." Before me stood fifty years of history, awaiting my fingers to start thumbing through them.

One of the boxes was marked "Pérez" and I thought, "Is that a new kind of Pez candy? I can pig out while I read!" I ripped off the plastic and found four mounds of comics but no candy. I pulled out a stack of ten or so, as many that would fit inside my hand. The one on the top was *The New Teen Titans* issue number 23. A woman, who I came to know as Starfire, was being tortured by another woman while Robin, Kid Flash, Wonder Girl and some other characters I didn't know floated outside in space. Flipping through it, my eyes lit up with amazement and wonder and then I started from the first page and read it, then the next one and so on. I spent four hours down there that day, reading everything with Pérez artwork that I could find. My grandmother called me for supper so I put everything back and exited the room like it was a holy place, quietly leaving and shutting the door with so much care.

The rest of the summer was spent reading comic books, every issue that George Pérez had drawn including ones that just had his cover artwork. I told my father that I had found his comics and I asked him about why he had stopped collecting. He said that with the *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, everything he had loved about comics had been erased and then he asked what I liked about his comics and I told him I loved the artist named George Pérez and had read everything with his artwork in it. My father smiled, went to another room and came back with twelve comics, handing them to me. The title read *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, and George Pérez was listed as the artist. I soaked up every page, marveling at the detail while my dad and I talked about different issues George had done that we liked.

To this day, everytime I pick up a George Pérez comic, I feel like I'm a kid again, reading comics in a musty old basement in the middle of summer, thinking, "Nothing gets better than this!"

AND SHE'S NOT IN CONTROL OF HERSELF!
HELP ME, PLEASE. I CAN'T STOP!
SKRAAKK
SKREEEEE
SKRRRRRR
SOMEONE.. HELP!!
YOU SEE, CHASE, THEY'VE GOT THESE POWERS AND THEY CAN'T CONTROL THEM.
AND YOU CAN'T HIDE IT ANY LONGER. WE'VE GOT ALL THIS ON FILM.
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL SEE THE TRUTH.
WE GOTTA HELP STARFIRE...
I'M ALREADY ON MY WAY, VIC.
WHERE YOU GO, BEAUTIFUL, I GO, TOO.
GOOD. I MIGHT NEED YOUR HELP, GAR.
KORY'S POWER COULD PROVE DIFFICULT TO HANDLE.
KORIAND'R, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
RAVEN, DO SOMETHING, WILL YOU?
I-- I CAN'T CONTROL MY STARBOLTS.
EVERYTHING HURTS!
10

New Teen Titans #23, page 10

# FOCUS ON: TITANS OBSCURA

*by Bobby Nash*

When Tony asked me to do a *Focus On* feature for the Titans I found myself with a dilemma. What topic? There are too many cool Titans covers to easily break them down into ten choices. I needed something a little more interesting, perhaps something not all Pérez fans have seen. I began scouring the Focus On vault for ideas when I found myself flipping throughout pages of *Pérez Obscura*, a book of rare and seldom-seen artwork George produced a few years back to help raise funds for his *Crimson Plague* project. That's when it hit me. Titans Obscura.

Here are ten pieces I found quite intriguing. There were certainly many to choose from as George has often contributed original artwork to magazines and other publications including *Titan Talk*, a Titans fanzine, and the first issue of *The George Pérez Newsletter*, the precursor to the very magazine you hold in your hands.

Enjoy this trip down memory lane as we focus on Titans Obscura.

***Titans Obscura 01:***
In the 80's, DC released sampler issues to help readers and retailers familiarize themselves with titles through two page previews. This piece was the center-spread of one of those issues featuring *The New Teen Titans*.

***Titans Obscura 02:***
George is a frequent guest at Heroes Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. 1996's theme focused on the Titans' anniversary and George was inking the current *Teen Titans* series over Dan Jurgens. This cover features art by Nick Cardy, Jurgens, and Pérez with colors by Tom Smith.

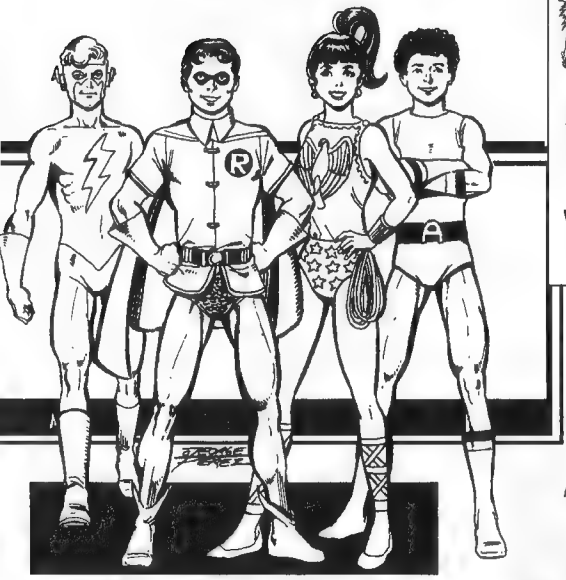
*Titans Obscura 03:*
"A Lonely Place of Dying." This *Batman/Titans* crossover set up the introduction of current Robin, Tim Drake.

*Titans Obscura 04:*
This is the cover to the NTT digest published in black & white by Tor books. Although this is a reprint book, the panels are recut into a new format to fit the size of the book.

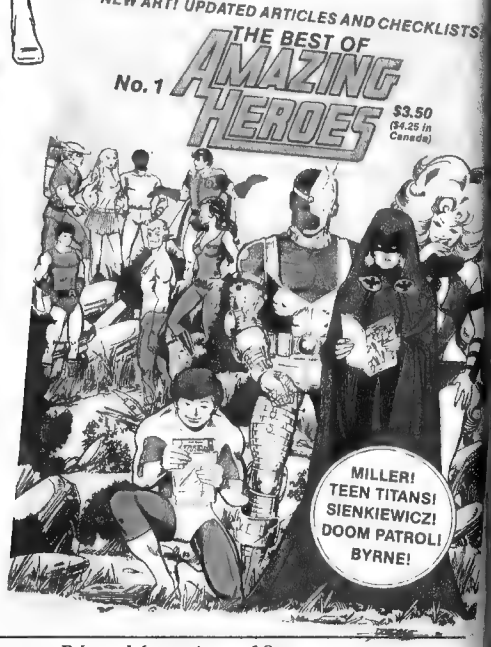
*Titans Obscura 05:*
This image was used on a DC Comics poster calendar for 1986.

***Titans Obscura 06:***
Issue # 117 of *New Issue Club Express* featured an interview with that Titanic Twosome: Wolfman and Pérez.

THE NEW ISSUE CLUB EXPRESS
OCTOBER 1992
No. 117
Wolfman and Perez Interviewed
• In This Issue - Lone Star's New Back Issue Catalog
—See Page 41



***Titans Obscura 07:***
The inspiration for this issue's topic. From Pérez Obscura, this image was a spot illustration for the 1983 San Diego Comicon program book as part of their tribute to the 60's.




***Titans Obscura 08:***
*The Best of Amazing Heroes* #1. George has provided many covers for AH during it's publishing history.

***Titans Obscura 09:***
Wally West might have left the Titans for his own book, but George still stopped by for a visit with the occasional cover like this intense one for *Flash* #15.

***Titans Obscura 10:***
Another anniversary issue for *Amazing Heroes* and George and the Titans are there. This one is from AH #50.

*Victor Stone's grandparents first appeared in* DC Sampler *#1. They were based on actors Scatman Cruthers and Zara Cully from* The Jeffersons.

# Troubled Teens

I am, I suppose what you would call a life time Titans fan. Although I was young at the time I clearly remember Titans West and their headquarters at "Gabriel's Horn." But I wouldn't say that I became a devoted fan until the birth of *The New Teen Titans*. The Wolfman/Pérez era.

I had followed many comic book series, even at that young age. Individual heroes' titles as well as group books. So why then did the Titans, that is *The New Teen Titans,* strike such a chord with not only me, but also many other teenagers at the time?

High Adventure? Cliffhangers? Great villains? Impeccable story telling? Mind blowing art? NAH!! None of that could have had anything to do with the success of the title, or could have possibly been enough to keep so many others and me coming back month after month. Could it possibly, just possibly have been anything to do with the fact that despite all their collective power, good looks (and in some cases wealth) their lives were more screwed up than any other teenager we knew? Including us?

This may be a very odd way to praise a milestone series that both Mr. Pérez and Mr. Wolfman did such a magnificent job on, but please bear with me.

We'll start with Dick Grayson. As Robin, he struggled for many years to emerge from the shadow of an overbearing mentor. I don't think a name is necessary, and of course we don't want to point fingers. To be more than a kid sidekick and a detective in his own right. This struggle came to fruition in "The Judas Contract."

Wonder Girl, who in those early days was establishing a career as a photographer and who would in issue #50 marry the love of her life, was still attempting to discover her true lineage. She had known nothing of her family, only that they supposedly perished in the same fire she was rescued from as an infant by Wonder Woman. It was Robin who was to eventually discover the truth in the now classic "Who Is Donna Troy..." a truth that would be revised years later when George returned to the title for a while; an origin that needed more explanation after her Amazon rescuer was to perish herself in another "Crisis." In fact, Donna's origin was "tweaked" again a couple of times.

There was Kid Flash and his ever-present inferiority complex.

Having the demon Trigon as her father was at times, almost more than Raven could bear.

Roy Harper may have been Green Arrow's former sidekick, but he lived with the stigma of being a former drug addict too.

DONNA, WE COME TOGETHER TO SHARE OUR STRENGTHS, OUR HOPES AND OUR KNOWLEDGE...
TERRANCE, WE COME TOGETHER TO SHARE OUR LOVE, OUR LIMS AND OUR ASTRAY
WE ARE ALWAYS TWO, BUT WE WILL ALWAYS BE ONE.
DONNA, I LOVE YOU AND RESPECT ALL THAT YOU ARE.
AND TERRANCE, I EMBRACE ALL TH IS YOURS WITH AL THAT I AM.

Tales of the Teen Titans #50, page 19

Victor Stone was in constant emotional turmoil trying to come to terms with being half-human and half robotic.

As a child, Starfire endured slavery at the hands of an alien race to save her home planet from annihilation.

Gar Logan had never come to terms with the death of his adopted mother Rita Farr and the rest of the original Doom Patrol.

Jericho lost the ability of speech when enemies of his father, the Terminator, sought revenge.

For some reason everyone kept apologizing to Lilith for what happened to Gnaark. What exactly did happen to Gnaark?

And let's not even go down the path of discussing where Terra's problems originated.

Even for guest stars like Frances Kane and Leonid Kovar, the Russian Starfire, life was not a walk in the park.

But because of Marv Wolfman and George Pérez, these troubled teens struggled with their collective problems with class, dignity and style. More importantly they struggled through them with friendship.

THEY JUST STARED AT EACH OTHER, THEN SUDDENLY WERE TOGETHER... AS IF DRAWN THAT WAY.
DADDY, WHO IS SHE?
YEAH, WHO'S SHE?
DON'T ASK ME. I ONLY LIVE HERE.
32
"HE NEVER KNEW WHERE HE LEARNED MY STACEY WAS NOW MY EVANS..."
HANK, YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT DONNA. I WAS STILL ASHAMED TO CARL BUEN WE HAD HER.
YOU HAD A DAUGHTER?
N-NO... WE ADOPTED DONNA.
TWO YEARS LATER, CARL DIED IN THAT JOB ACCIDENT I TOLD YOU ABOUT. WE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH MONEY...
32
I WAS SCARED ... AND THAT LAWYER FROM THE ADOPTION AGENCY, MR. HARRISON...
--HE SAID IF I WAS UNEMPLOYED, THE STATE WOULDN'T LET ME KEEP DONNA
I--I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. I LOVED DONNA SO MUCH SHE WAS EVERYTHING I LIVED FOR...
32
.. BUT HE SAID DONNA WOULD BE ADOPTED BY OTHER PARENTS WHO COULD SUPPORT AND LOVE HER. IT WOULD BE BEST FOR HER, HE SAID.
I'M SO SORRY DONNA. PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
I UNDERSTAND. BELIEVE ME I DO.
I--I'M JUST SO GLAD I ADOPTED YOU.

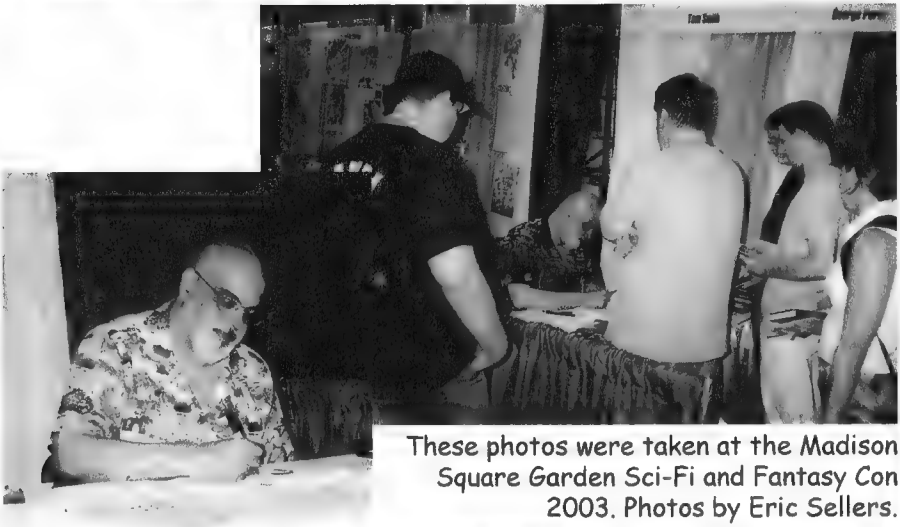
New Teen Titans #38, page 18

Through the Titans we were shown that if you believed in yourself that you could achieve anything and overcome any obstacle in your way. And if you had good friends around you, well, that made you that much stronger.

Marv and George showed us the power of youth and friendship. Through stories like "Runaways" they showed the public in general that there are problems out there, and society's youth have very adult problems to deal with too.

They showed us our potential, and all in the guise of a group of super-powered teenagers. No other writer or artist could have done it better.

# PHOTO GALLERY



These photos were taken at the Madison Square Garden Sci-Fi and Fantasy Con 2003. Photos by Eric Sellers.

We need photos for future issues. So, if you have any photos of The Maestro, please submit them, and you'll get the usual perks!

Photo by Glenn Haight.

# INTERVIEW WITH MARV WOLFMAN

*January 2004*

Continuing the with the same interviewers, Marv Wolfman takes the stage to shed some light on current projects.

*GG: After all this time, is there a particular image-drawn by George-that still stands out?*

The cover of the first Titans/Doom patrol, with Robotman in the foreground. That's my favorite.

*GG: Besides conquering your writer's block faster (or not having it at all), is there anything you would've handled differently about the end of your run on Titans?*

There was nothing I was allowed to do. I would have wanted Nightwing in it, but the Batman editor wouldn't let me use him. I never would have let some of the characters get to where they were, but the previous Titans editor was plotting the book. I think considering the problems, I did as good a job as I could.

*VG: At comic conventions, how often are you approached as a contact by budding artists and writers wanting you to take a look at their work and give them some feedback? As being a budding writer who's pestered enough pros during a con to know they don't have the time, how feasible is it to ask ANY pro at a con, yourselves included, to take material home for review at your convenience? If a SASE is included will that increase the likelihood of feedback? For an industry that always claims its always on the lookout for new talent it sure does close the doors, duct tape them shut, weld them closed and rig them with security measures that makes the Batmobile look unprotected.*

I won't read any written material. I neither have the time nor take the risk that three years from now I'll forget I read somebody's sample and "come up" with their plot. I just don't do it. Artistically, I'll look it at a con, if there's time, and give a comment right there. I never do any of this at home because I never get around to it which is unfair to the people. So it's easier to say no.

*JM: What are your earliest non-comics creative influences?*

Bradbury, Heinlein, Bester, Rod Serling, etc.

*JM: Which of the characters you created for someone else (like DC) has surprised you most in popularity? In longevity? In other ways?*

At Marvel: Nova, Terrax and Bullseye. I knew up front Blade and Black Cat could last as they were really good characters. At DC: Destiny (because Neal Gaiman revived him and did him so well), Professor Hamilton who has appeared on TV and cartoons because I thought he was a throwaway character. I knew the Titans were good so I'm not surprised. I am surprised the Omega Men still aren't around because they're good characters with a good storyline.

*JM: What was your first paying writing job? What was your worst paying writing job?*

The very first was a story for Castle of Frankenstein which I co-wrote and co-drew, partnered with Len Wein. The first DC job was an issue of Blackhawk.

*JM: With which of your own characters do you most identify? With what character created by someone else do you identify?*

I identify myself with parts of many of my characters, Dracula included. But it may be a passing comment or some intense personal situation. But none of my characters have ever spoken for me.

*JM: If you could have one superpower, what would it be, and why would you want it?*

Flying. It would be cool.

*KP: Was there ever any chance of DC doing the Titans/Legion crossover that you and George Pérez, Paul Levitz and Keith Geffen were going to do way back when. And if, with the success of JLA/Avengers, there might someday be that Titans/X-Men that you and George had planned? Maybe with a different artist?*

I don't even remember what I was going to do other than the villains: Brother Blood and the Hellfire Club, and I no longer even remember what the Hellfire Club was all about as I don't read X-Men.

*JW: What did you have in mind when you reintroduced Kole post-CRISIS during your time on the "Team Titans" book?*

I have to admit I don't know and don't remember ever using her again after Crisis. Sorry.

*MM: Did you at some point have in mind a "dream team" of Titans? I wonder if your intentions were to reunite the team made up of Raven, Jericho, Cyborg, Changeling, Starfire, Nightwing, Troia, and perhaps round them off with Azrael and Kole. On that note, would you mind sharing what your intentions for Azrael were?*

I may use some of my Azrael ideas elsewhere, so I won't talk about them. My Titans are the core char-

acters including Jericho. Azrael and Kole would not have ever been long term members.

*MM: How are you coming along with finishing "Games"? Can you give us any teasers about the framing story? I know that the main story (the flashback) needs to be kept under wraps, but perhaps you can shed some light on any special circumstances involving the current team. Will Raven be involved? Jericho? It has been rumored that the book will be issued as a hardcover. That must be pleasing, considering the masterpiece it will be, and the efforts it took you to get it published. Do you know anything about format and publication dates? I personally feel this milestone needs at least a poster. Do you know if DC will be publicizing "Games" in any way?*

I haven't spoken to George since it was announced. I'm sure he's busy finishing up other work, so nothing has progressed as of yet. Until George and I talk, anything I say is moot. As for when it will come out, I guess that depends on George's schedule. I hope DC doesn't rush him or schedule it before he's done. I'd like him to do it at his pace and have fun with it rather than feel pressured to turn it out just to make a publishing date.

*MM: It's so gratifying to the fanbase to see the name Marv Wolfman associated with Titans projects when they appear... like the story with Raven and Kid Flash in* Adventures in the DC Universe *or the secret origin of the New Teen Titans with Phil Jimenez's art, and then the wonderful segment in* Titans *#25, done by you and George. Please tell us that "Games" is not the last we'll see of you in relation to Titans. You have a feel for the characters that no other writer could ever seem to grasp. Your characterization is unparalleled, and often distorted to the point of blasphemy by other writers. We've seen Starfire depicted as the brave warrior princess, as a ditzy airhead, as a brash, violent killer... and now we'll get to see her worked on by her creator again... ditto with Raven, Jericho, and the others. I kind of feel like a parched castaway who's been floating on a raft, offered a taste of fine wine ("Games") and then worried about being set adrift again. Are there any rays of hope?*

I would love to do more Titans work and before the new series came out even submitted an idea for a new title featuring Raven, Starfire and Cyborg in a completely new concept fitting their ages, but DC was already making plans for a new series so they weren't interested in my concept. They've also turned down other Titans related projects (one-shots, Elseworld ideas, etc.) I've suggested, so I have to assume they aren't interested in my working on it. It's a shame. As Marvel still uses Chris on X-Men, I would think I still have a lot to offer. If DC ever asks me to work on Titans of course I'd say yes. I guess it's up to them to realize.

Visit Marv's website at http://www.marvwolfman.com

# THE NEW TEEN TITANS AND YOU

by Joe Grunenwald

## *Why We Still Care*

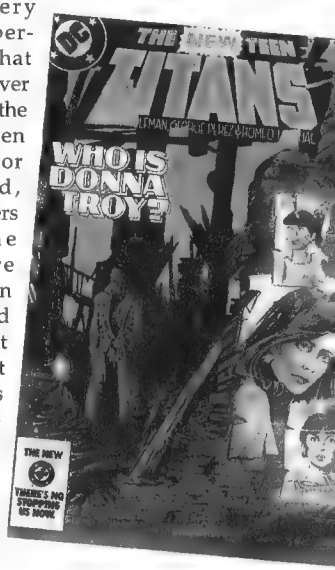
Marv Wolfman and George Pérez, it can easily be argued, saved the Teen Titans.

In 1973, lagging sales caused the DC Comics' series *Teen Titans* to go on sabbatical, in search of a new creative team and a new voice for the series. After three years, the title returned with new members and a new look. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough. After ten issues, the title was canceled. A year later, a lackluster guest appearance in *Brave and the Bold* failed to spark any fan interest in bringing the team back, and the world's greatest sidekicks were written off.

Written off, that is, until Wolfman and Pérez came along.

With the New Teen Titans' debut in *DC Comics Presents* #26, collaborators Marv Wolfman and George Pérez planted a team of former sidekicks firmly on the map as DC's answer to Marvel's smash-hit *Uncanny X-Men*. Now, over twenty years later, *The New Teen Titans* is still one of the most revered and talked-about comic series of all-time. Why? What makes this series stand out above the rest?

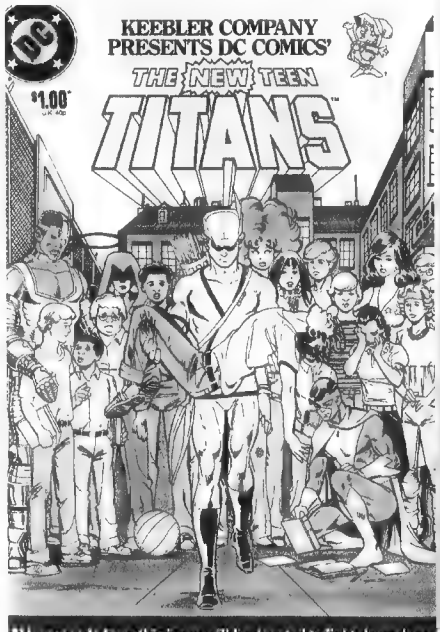
For starters, the characters were engaging, and they actually developed. Kid Flash had relationship troubles and doubted his role as a hero. Raven, Cyborg and Robin all had problems with their respective fathers, be they actual fathers or father figures. Starfire explored a strange new world, and allowed readers to see Earth from a new perspective. These are just a few examples of how the average reader could relate to these larger-than-life figures. Wolfman and Pérez took these characters and gave them believable personalities and problems that everyone has had to deal with at one point or another, be they girl/guy troubles, arguments with parents, or simply trying to find one's place in the world. On top of that, the characters actually grew and developed something that was unheard of in many team books like *Justice League of America* and *Avengers*. Pérez and Wolfman enjoyed the luxury of having seven completely independent characters to use and to do with what they wanted (Robin only occasionally showed up in *Batman*, and Kid Flash and Wonder Girl very rarely in *Flash* and *Wonder Woman*, respectively). From the beginning, readers watched Dick Grayson take chances and grow into his own man, eventually retiring as Robin and forging ahead as Nightwing. Wonder Girl discovered her true origins. Cyborg came to terms with his father and found love in the person of Sarah Simms. The stars of the series weren't the only characters that developed, though. Secondary characters like Deathstroke the Terminator and Adrian Chase each had very distinct personalities that developed over the course of the series. When each issue or story ended, the characters within the pages were different than they had been when it began. It was this kind of constant development and interesting characterization that



made *The New Teen Titans* stand out above the rest.

But interesting characters can only get you so far. Relevant and entertaining stories did the rest for this series. The Titans tackled social issues such as drug addiction, runaways, and cults, while still telling exciting adventure stories. *The New Teen Titans* has the distinction of being part of President Reagan's anti-drug program. Three special drug awareness comics were published featuring the Titans and a new hero, the Protector, created specifically for those specials. Another arc of the regular series focused on runaway children, their motivations for running away, and what happened to them when they did so. The Titans even confronted the issue of cult worship, going up against the Church of Blood, a cult whose members included politicians and media celebrities. Other story lines included Robin and D.A. Adrian Chase waging a two-man war on the Scarapelli drug ring and Cyborg dealing with a hostage situation involving ex-girlfriend Sarah Sims. Wolfman and Pérez managed to fit relevant ideas and storylines into an action-oriented comic, and they did it seamlessly.

Finally, top-notch art catapulted *The New Teen Titans* into the upper echelon of comic quality. It's easy to say that the art on *The New Teen Titans* is one of the largest factors in the series' success. But what's more important is to see how the art developed. Over the course of the original 50 issues of the first *The New Teen Titans* series, George Pérez refined his penciling style into what is, essentially, the style you see today. In the beginning, characters had fairly generic faces. Dick Grayson and Gar Logan could easily have swapped heads and no one would have been the wiser (except... well... Dick Grayson doesn't have green skin). However, as the series progressed, each character developed their own distinct face. Wally West's face became more slender, Gar Logan's more youthful, Dick Grayson's maturer. Raven's soft features became more angular, her forehead growing larger. Compare the headshots from the cover of *The New Teen Titans* #9 to the page in *The New Teen Titans* #39 when Dick Grayson reveals he is giving up being Robin and you'll see exactly how much Pérez's facial style alone changed between the beginning of the series and towards the end of it. As much as the character's faces developed, the settings they were placed in developed equally as much. Pérez's attention to background detail has always been one of the hallmarks of his work, and the development of those skills took place largely in the pages of *The New Teen*



*Titans*. Compare the two-page splash early in *The New Teen Titans* #39 with the opening splash page of *The New Teen Titans* #1; the amount of detail in the for-mer piece is staggeringly high when compared with the latter. Even the subtleties of Pérez's work are astounding. The cover to *The New Teen Titans* #40 is a perfect example of this. The focus of the cover is fixed on the figure of Brother Blood, emerging from the pool of blood. The casual observer might see this and nothing more, but looking closer, you can see the Titans themselves trapped on the giant stalactites in the background. Another spectacular example is the cover to *The New Teen Titans* #38. The 'R' symbol on Robin's costume is mostly obscured by the teen wonder's trench coat, yet still noticeable enough so that the viewer recognizes that it is, in fact, Robin. It might also not be seen upon first glance, but Dick is holding the small doll which leads him and Donna to her true past. It is small, subtle things like this which make Pérez's work on *The New Teen Titans* some of the best work of his career.

WALLY, DON'T GO YET. I GUESS THIS IS AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO MAKE MY ANNOUNCEMENT.
MAYBE IT'S NOT AS BIG AS WALLY LEAVING, BUT IT'S JUST AS IMPORTANT TO ME.
WALLY SAID HE WANTS TO GROW UP A BIT, IN A WAY, SO DO I.
I'M GIVING UP BEING ROBIN.
YOU'RE JOKING!
YOU CRAZY?
IS THAT WISE?
ARE YOU SURE?
GREAT! I JOIN, AN' EVERYONE LEAVES!
C'MON, YOU'RE PULLIN' OUR LEGS.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?

For all of these reasons and more, *The New Teen Titans* remains one of the most talked about and respected comic books to come out of the 1980's. As the high watermark that all *Titans* series are compared to, it doesn't look like the talk about *The New Teen Titans* will be dying off any time soon. The upcoming DC re-launch of *Teen Titans*, starring four of the seven original New Teen Titans (the four members that Wolf-man and Pérez created for *NTT*) is a testament to how far-reaching and influential Wolfman and Pérez's original *New Teen Titans* series was.

# A FAN'S VIEWPOINT: THE JUDAS CONTRACT

*By Leo Whitman*

How many of you remember when a comic book became more than a piece of cheap entertainment for you? For me, it was when I was fortunate enough to find a copy of *Tales of the Teen Titans* #43. That was when I saw the potential of what comic books could be when their creators were working in sync.

Artist George Pérez and writer Marv Wolfman took over the *Teen Titans* in 1980. When the Titans were originally created in the 1960s, they were basically a junior version of the Justice League of America, their adult mentors' group. George and Marv made the Titans so much more than that. Along with introducing new characters into the group, they more fully realized characters that had been a part of the DC pantheon since the 40s.

The pre-release ads for the *New Teen Titans* caught my attention back in the summer of 1980. I grabbed up their preview in *DC Comics Presents* and bought the first eight issues of the series. Then, for reasons independent of the *Teen Titans*, I went on a comic book hiatus for a couple of years.

Like many pre-teens, I went through the stage where I felt that I had outgrown comics. Being a DC fan from day one, I wasn't aware of the evolution of comic storytelling and art going on at DC's main competitor, Marvel Comics. Those early issues of the Pérez/Wolfman Titans showed some potential, but my previous years of middle-of-the-road stories and art had turned me off of comics.

It was in 1983 that a friend of mine told me about some of the things going on in *The Flash* (the death of The Reverse Flash) that interested me enough to start looking at comics again. I picked up the odd assortment of comics each month, including a couple of *Teen Titans* issues and their second annual.

In the small town that I lived in, there were no direct sales shops. Everything I bought came from local convenience stores and supermarkets. As an aside, those of you who haven't had the pleasure of looking through a comic rack while your mom shops for meat and potatoes don't know what you're missing.

Even though some comics would list their next issue's ship dates, that wasn't always the date the comics reached the stores. Worse yet, the comics were usually only kept in the stores until they sold out or for three months… Whichever came first. There were some stores whose magazine supplier wasn't very thorough about removing the older issues. Those stores were as close as I got at the time to a comic book shop with back issues.

Okay, enough with the rambling. Allow me to get back to *Teen Titans* #43. As I mentioned, I caught of few issues of the *Teen Titans*. Enough to know the current cast of characters and generally what was going on. My interest had been piqued with *The New Teen Titans Annual* #2 about a year earlier, but due to the aforementioned problems finding new comics each month, I couldn't keep up with the issues… Until issue #43.

The cover to #43 interested me. The detail of the art, the layout of the panels on the cover and the appearance of the Terminator all caught my attention. My attention never

'ER OUTTTTT!
WE'RE WHAT? BIG, BRAVE WARRIOR?
SOMEONE HELP ME UP. THIS IS EMBARRASSING.
THANK GOD LOGAN ISN'T HERE TO--
K'NDA WOBBLY, ISN'T HE?
GREAT! JUST GREAT!
TOWING TALKING ANIMALS

lapsed all the way through to the end of the issue.

There were two things I knew after reading that story. First was that I had to get the next issue when it came out, and second that I had to grab up as many of the previous issues as I could. In one of those happy accidents of timing, I found issue #43 after it had already been out a couple of weeks, so I didn't have to wait long for issue #44. Fortune also smiled on me in finding the previous three issues with some ease.

In going through the earlier issues, my favorite of the bunch became #42. George, once again, had an excellent cover that alluded to everything in the whole story. The color hold of Tara Markov's eyes in red over the snapshots of the Titans had an eerie appeal to it.

Something much less eerie, but appealing even more, was the splash page with Starfire in that purple bikini. George's artistic abilities had come a long way in the three years since he first drew her in a bikini back in issue #2.

KNOCK OFF THE WOLF CALLS, GAR...
WHEN YOU SAID YOU HAD SWIM SUITS FOR US HERE, I DIDN'T EXPECT THESE--! TWINS!
THESE AREN'T BATHING SUITS, THEY'RE STRINGS WITH GLAMD CONDITIONS!
OOH! I'M SO PLEASED YOU CAME.
YOU LOOK LOVELY, KORAND'R.
SO DO YOU. I THINK I WILL LIKE IT HERE ON EARTH

Panel design and interior detail had long been associated with George Pérez. The other thing he was famous for was the full-figured women he drew. By 1984, George had much better control over all those aspects and more.

In a story called "The Eyes of Tara Markov," George constantly reminds the reader of the danger in her eyes. If he had tried to draw this story even two years earlier, I doubt it would have contained even a fraction of the detail, drama and character expression he put in there.

There is one thing I am certain of—If another artist had drawn "The Judas Contract" it would have required more than three issues and an oversized annual to tell. George packed so much story into every panel and page.

There are so many high points in the story where George's story-telling abilities shine. Without going into further detail about every page of the series, here are some

of my favorite examples:

*Issue #42 Pages 6 - 7*

George's sense of the comedic is very strong. He also knows when to leave a little bit to the viewer's imagination. Instead of showing us Cyborg as he lands on his butt, we see Sarah Simms' face. George does some directorial magic with his pencil that puts Spielberg to shame.

*Issue #43 Every Page*

Suspense was the theme in that issue. The last panel of every page contained a cliff hanger that moves the reader to the next page.

*Issue #44 Page 18*

Time stands still as we're moved panel by panel, seeing things in slow motion, just as the Terminator does. Something else that says a lot about the talents of Pérez and Wolfman, the Titans do not make an appearance in this story except at the end when Dick Grayson becomes Nightwing.

*Annual #3 Page 25*

Action. From almost the beginning of his career, George has been lauded for his ability to draw action. The scene on page 25 is reminiscent of other charging images of the Titans that George drew on his tenure with the book. It had been used enough that the readers probably expected it and George more than likely knew that when he drew it. He built the tension up, teasing us. This four-part story was near its end and there were only a few pages left. With that scene, we knew that the action would begin in earnest.

To both George and Marv's credit, they created an emotional and entertaining comic book story where the main characters were pretty much out of action for two and a half issues. The story demanded an artist who could draw the quiet moments equally as well as the intense ones. There is only one artist I know who fits that description and his name

MY BOND IS.
MOVE!
NOW! KILL HIM!
YOU SAID NOBODY WAS THAT FAST. I AM.
SKRRRCH
I'M MORE THAN ANY ORDINARY MAN.
BAM BAM
I'VE GOT POWERS THAT MAKE ME GREATER...
BAM
...THAN EVEN THE LEGENDARY JACKAL.
BLAM
BAM
OH, MY GOD! SLADE! WH-WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
JOEY!?!
HE'S ALIVE...THE KILLER WAS JUST STARTING TO CUT HIS THROAT.
"SLADE HAS ALWAYS WANTED...NO--NEEDED --TO BE THE BEST. NOW OUR SON SUFFERED FOR THAT MONUMENTAL EGO.
"YOU SEE, SLADE HAD RISKED OUR SON'S LIFE GAMBLING ON HIS SPEED. BUT HE JUST WASN'T FAST ENOUGH."
WE HAVE TO GET HIM TO A HOSPITAL--QUICKLY.

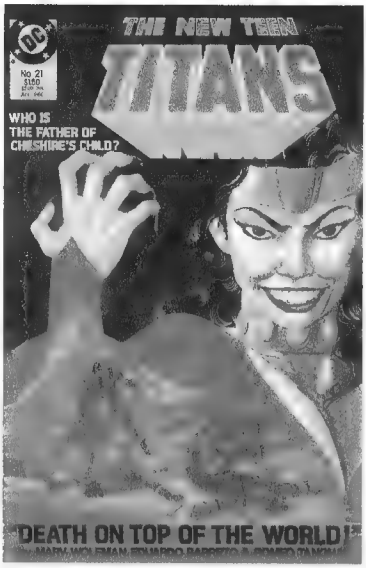
## QUESTION OF THE ISSUE

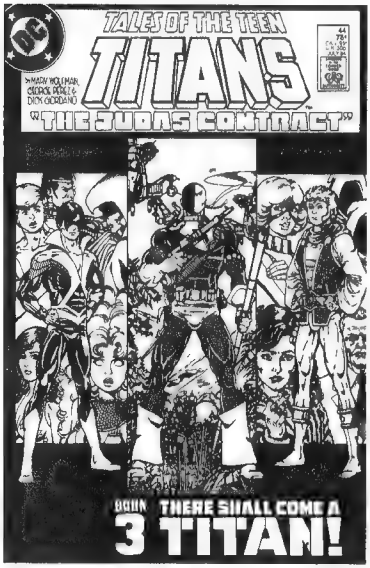
*What is your favorite Titans cover by Pérez and why?*

I think I have to go with *New Teen Titans* #21 (the second series). The image of the Titans fallen in the snow imaged within Cheshire's green costume has always been one of the most striking covers of the series to me. I had dropped Titans before that issue, but later, I had to have that one for the cover alone.

It's everything a PhotoShop user like me wishes I could draw myself rather than use an application to do so. George's artwork here is truly amazing.

~ Mark Metz



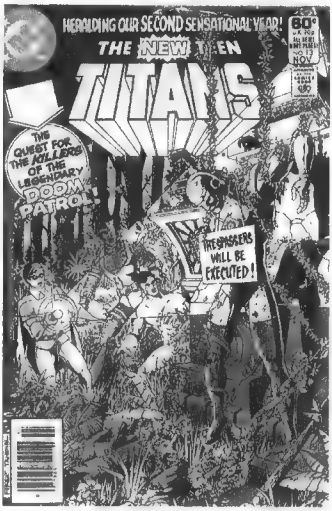

*Tales of the Teen Titans* #44

That is my favorite cover of the Teen Titans by George Pérez. The cover introduces three new characters, all in a very heroic stance. In each of the background, it tells the story of the character. This is definitely one of the best cover ever made!

~ Vu Nguyen

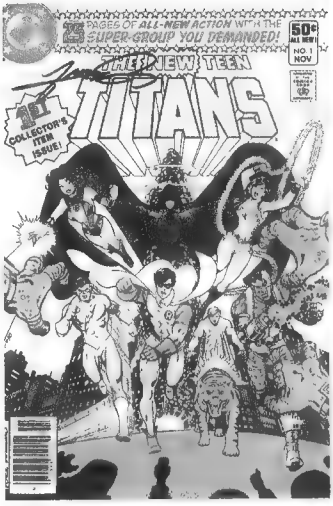
My favorite all-time Titans cover was *New Teen Titans* #13. It was my first exposure to the team. I first remember seeing that cover on the back page of *World's Finest* #273. It was the old DAILY PLANET feature and it was headlined "Titans Track Murderers," It featured the cover to *NTT* #13. I was just amazed at the cover and a little scary. Heck, I was only eight at the time and a sign around Robotman's neck saying "Trespassers will be Executed" was kind of scary.

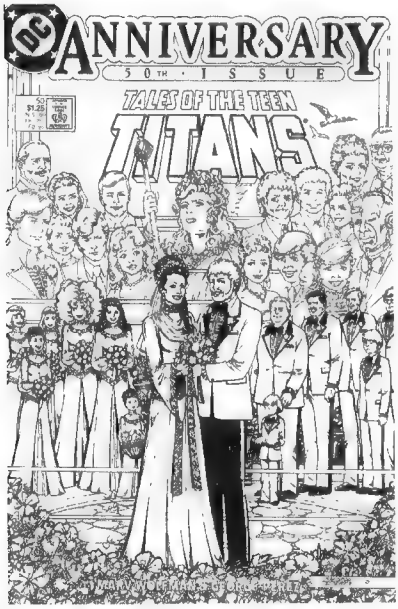
~ Eric Sellers


HERALDING OUR SECOND SENSATIONAL YEAR!
THE NEW TEEN
TITANS
THIS QUEST FOR THE KILLERS OF THE LEGENDARY DOOM PATROL!
TRESPASSERS WILL BE EXECUTED!

As a kid, I probably spent more time staring at the cover of the very first issue than any of the others. The composition of the team, racing at you, is perfect, and the colors are incredibly vibrant against the white background. Then, the realization that we are seeing the team from the point of view of invading aliens! Who could resist buying this book?

~ David Branning



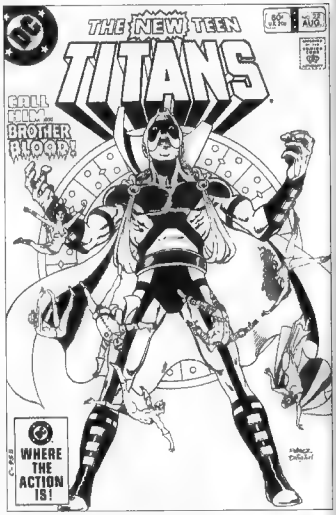




I would have to say that my favorite Titans cover is the issue featuring Donna's wedding (#50). Apart from portraying this special occasion in a "snapshot" it captures the sentiment of the issue and features all the major Titans "players" in their civilian identities, which is something that you never see on the cover of any super-hero comic

~ Michael Rudolph

My favorite cover is *New Teen Titans* #22 "Call him Brother Blood." It was a very striking image of Brother Blood standing in a powerful pose while the Titans, much smaller in size, are falling all around him like rag dolls. Much like Deathstroke the Terminator and Trigon, Brother Blood stands out as one of the few villains that has battled the entire team of Titans on his own and has come close to defeating them. While most of George Pérez' covers are super detailed, this cover was elegant in its simplicity. It contained just one villain dead center and larger than life, seven smaller heroes falling helplessly, and a circle behind the villain with the initials "BB" all around blatantly stating: It's Brother Blood's world. No backgrounds, no buildings, no crowds. Nothing! Pure genius!

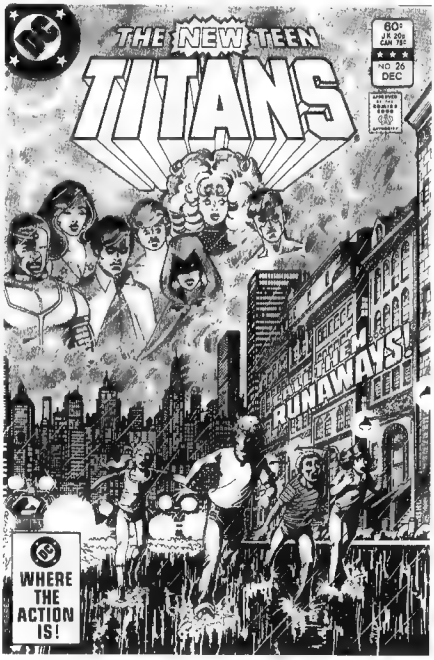
~ Gil Carlo



My favorite *New Teen Titans* cover is issue #19. The cover to this issue is memorable to me because it got me hooked on the *New Teen Titans* again. This was after I had seen issue #1 almost a year ago previously on my favorite newsstand, which is no longer there today.

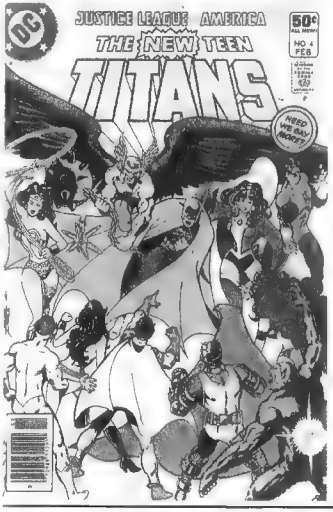
I remember reading this issue many times. This is when I started noticing how George Pérez's art was now undergoing a dramatic change that would make his "detailed artwork" trademark more evident than ever before. Everything was now starting to look more crisp and detailed than before.

~ Carlos Pico




New Teen Titans #26 has to be one of the best. "Call Them Runaways" was one of those stories that honestly had the greatest impact on me as a reader. I had stopped buying NTT and when I saw that cover I bought it immediately. With the Titans in the background looking over the kids running through the rain, the emotion coming from the entire cover quite simply struck a nerve with me.

~ Gary Beck



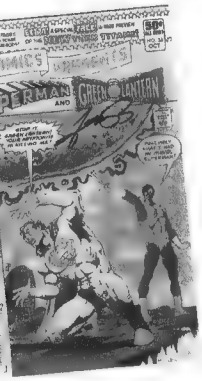

I will always love *New Teen Titans* #4 because it features the Justice League. I would dearly love to own that one or at least get a full size copy of it, the color guide or something.

~ Kirk Philbrick

# TITANS CHECKLIST

(CP=Cover Pencils · IP=Interior Pencils · IA=Interior Artist · II=Interior Inks · PL=Pencil Layouts)

## COMICS:



**Best of DC Digest**
#18 (CP)
#35 (rep; IA)
#61 (rep; IP)
#69 (rep; IP)

**(BODD) Year's Best Comics Stories**
Vol. 4, #23 *(reprint* New Teen Titans *#8)*

**DC Comics Presents**
#26 *(first appearance of the New Teen Titans)*

**DC Sampler**
#1 *(Includes advertisement for Teen Titans by Marv Wolfman and George Pérez (who also provide an original artpiece)*
#2 *(Includes advertisement for Teen Titans by Marv Wolfman and George Pérez)*

**Deathstroke, the Terminator**
#10 (I)
#11 (I)

**Elson's Presents**
#3 (rep Teen Titans #3)

**History of the DC Universe**
#2 (CA)(IA)

**New Teen Titans**
vol 1, #1 (cp) (p)
#2(CA)(P)
#3(CA)(P)
#4(CA)(P)
#5(CA)
#6(CA)(P)
#7(CA)(P)
#8(CA)(P)
#9(CA)(P)
#10(CA)(P)
#11(CA)(P)
#12(CA)(P)
#13(CA)(P)
#14(CA)(P)
#15(CA)(P)
#16(CA)(P)
#17(CA)(P)
#18(CA)(P)
#19(CA)(P)
#20(CA)(P)
#21(CA)(P)
#22(CA)(P)
#23(CA)(P)
#24(CA)(P)
#25(CA)(P)
#26(CA, PL, IP)
#27(CA, IP)
#28(CA, IP)
#29(CA, IP)
#30(CA, IP)
#31(CA, IP)
#32(CA, IP)
#33(CA, IP)
#34(CA, IP)
#35(CA)
#36(CA)
#37(CA, IP)
#38(CA, PL, IA)
#39(CA, IA)
#40(CA, IA)
Millennium Edition: *TNTT* #1 (CP, IP)
Annual 1
Annual 2

**New Teen Titans**
vol 2, #1(CA, IA)
#2(CA, IA)
#3(CA, IP)
#4(CA, IP)
#5(CA, IP)
#6(CA, PL)
#7(CA)
#19(CA)
#20(CA)
#21(CA)
#22(CA)
#23(CA)

#43(CA)
#47(IA)
Annual 4 (CA)

**New Titans**
*previously "The New Teen Titans" (Vol. 2)*
#50 (CA, PL, IA)
#51(CA, PL, IP)
#52 (CA, PL, IP)
#53(CA, PL, IP)
#54(CA, PL, IP)
#55(CA, PL, IP)
#56(CA, PL)
#57(CA, PL, IP)
#58(CI, PL, IP)
#59 (CI, PL, IP)
#60(CA, PL, IP)
#61(CA, PL, IP)
#62(CI)
#63(CI)
#64(CI)
#65(CI)
#66(CI, PL)
#67(CI, PL)
#130(CA)
Annual 5 (CI)

**Secret Origins Annual**
#3 (W)(I)

**Tales of the New Teen Titans**
#1(CA, IA)
#2(CA, IA)
#3(CA, IA)
#4(CA, IA)

**Team Titans**
#1-Terra (I I)
#1-Nightrider (I I)
#7-pinup (I)

**Titans Beat**
(CI, II)

**Teen Titans**
vol 2, #1(CI, II)
#1 (Dynamic Forces)
#2(CI, II)
#3(CI, II)
#4(CI, II)
#5(CI, II)
#6(CI, II)
#7(CI, II)
#8(CI, II)
#9(CI, II)
#10(CI, II)
#11(CI, II)
#12(CI, II)
#13(CI, II)
#14(CI, II)
#15(CI, II)

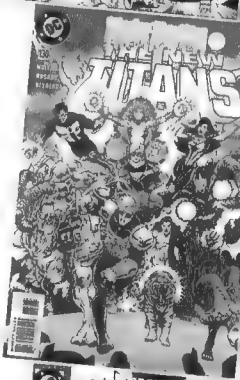
**Tales of the Teen Titans**
*previously "The New Teen Titans"*
#41(CA, IP)
#42 (CA, IA)
#43(CA, IP)
#44(CA, IP)
#45(CA, IP)
#46(CA, IP)
#47(CA, IP)
#48(CA, IP)
#49(CA)
#50(CA, IA)
#51(CA)
#52(CP)
#53(CP)
#59(IP)
#60(IA)
#61(IA)
#62(IP)
#63(IP)
#64(IP)
#67(CA)
#89(CI)
Annual 3 (CA, IP)

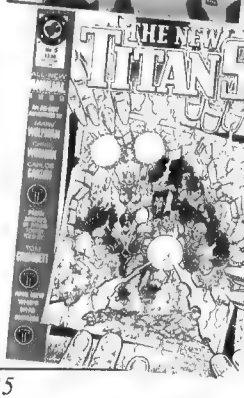
**Teen Titans Drug**
#1 Keebler (CP, IP)
#2 NSDA *(back cover P)*
#3 IBM *(back cover)*

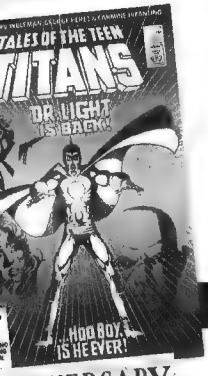
**Official Teen Titans Index**
#3(IA)
#4(IA)
#5(IA)

**Teen Titans Spotlight**
#1(CA)
#19(CA)

**Titans**
#25(IA)





**Who's Who in the DC Universe**
#1(CA, IA) #13(CA,IA)
#2(CA, IA) #14(CP, IA)
#3(CP, IA) #17(CA,IA)
#4(CP, IA) #18(CP, I I)
#5(CP, IA) #19(IA)
#8(IA) #22(IA)
#9(IA) #23(IA)
#10(IA) #24(IA)
#11(IA) #26(IA)
#12(IA)

**Who's Who Update '88**
#2(IA)
#3(IA)

**Who's Who Looseleaf**
#3(I I)

**World's Finest**
#300 (IA)

## COLLECTIONS:

**New Teen Titans:** *The Judas Contract* (CA, IA)
**New Teen Titans Archive** Vol 1 (CA, IA)
**New Teen Titans Archive** Vol 2 (CA, IA)
**New Teen Titans** (Tor Book) (rep; CA, IP)
**Teen Titans: The Terror of Trigon** Tpb (IA)

## APPAREL:

**New Teen Titans Anti-Drug T-Shirt,** 1984

**New Teen Titans Painter's Cap,** 1984

## FANZINES:

**Amazing Heroes**
#2(CA)
#40(A)
#50(CA)
#135 (CA; Int)

**Best of Amazing Heroes**
#1(CA)

**Comics Buyers Guide**
#1187 (ARTIC LE)*(Reprint Art)*

**Chain Reaction**
#4 (Interview)

**Comic Times**
#2(int; CA)

**Comics Arena**
#1

**Comics Collector**
#3 (Spring 1984) (int)

**Comics Feature**
#19 (int; CA)

**Comics Journal**
#79(int)
#80(int)

**Comics Interview**
#3 (IA)
#20(A)

**FA**
#107 (*Interview*)(CA)

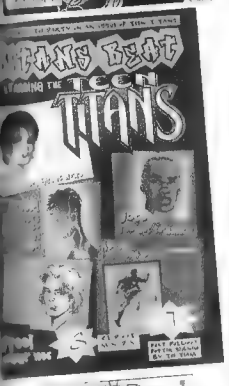
**Focus on George Pérez** (CA, IA)

**George Pérez Newsletter**
#1(CA, IA)

**Heroes Catalogue**
#7 (A)
#9 (A)
#11 (A)

**Heroes Magazine**
#1(A)(CA)
#2(A)

**Lone Star Catalog**
#107 (A)



**Modern Masters**
#2: George Pérez (CA, IA)

**New Issue Club Express**
#107 (IP)
#117 (CA)

Pérez Archives
#1 (*deluxe*) (CA, IA)
#1 (*regular*) (CA, IA)
#1 (*hardcover*) (CA, IA)

**Pérez Obscura**
#1 (CA, IA)

**Previews**
vol 6, #6 (CI)

**Sketch Magazine**
#10 (CA; Int)

**Titans Talk**
#6 (CA)
#8 (A)
#14 (P)
#29 (CA)
#30 (CA)
#50 (CI)
#60 (CA)

## MISCELLANEOUS:

**DC Direct**
Starfire Action Figure
Raven Action Figure
Cyborg Action Figure
Teen Titans PVC Set
Titans Gift Set

**Super Power Toys**
Cyborg

**DC Card Game**
Brother Blood
Changeling
Cyborg
Jericho
Nightwing
Raven
Starfire
Trigon
Wonder Girl

**DC Wall Calendar 1986** (IA)

**DC Heroes Role Playing Game**
#201 (CP)
#215 *Fire and Ice* (CA)
#252 *New Titans Sourcebook* #252 (CA)

**DC Heroes Metal Figure Set**
New Teen Titans and Adversaries, 1985

**DC Style Guide**
(Teen Titans character sheets)

**Heroclix**
Starfire,Changeling, Deathstroke

**Heroes Convention Brochure**
1982 (A)

**Heroes Convention Notepads**
1983 (A)

**New Teen Titans Anti-Drug Program Teacher's Kit**
1983 (CA)

**New Teen Titans Box Riser Card**
1982 (A)

**New Teen Titans Button**
1985 (P)

**New Teen Titans Turnaround Sheets**
1984-1986 (A)

**The Orlando Sentinel**
(29 Mar 99) (CA, Int)

**Teen Titans (Cartoon)**
based on character designs by Pérez

## CONVENTION PROGRAMS:

**Dixie Trek Program**
1988 (CA)

**Heroes Convention**
1982 (CA)
1984 (A)
1995 (P)
1996 (*Back Cover Art*)

**San Diego Comic Con**
198I (A)
1983 (A)

**Teen Titans #2: 1996 San Diego Expo Preview**
1996 (I)(CI)

**New Teen Titans/ Batman & the Outsiders**
1984 (*Reprint covers NTT vol 1 #37* and *Batman and the Outsiders* #5)

**Starfire's Wedding**
1983 (*Reprint cover NTT vol 2 #17*)

**New Teen Titans Collector Poster**
1982

**Starfire (Heroes Aren't Hard to Find)**
1982

**Teen Titans**
1996 (I)

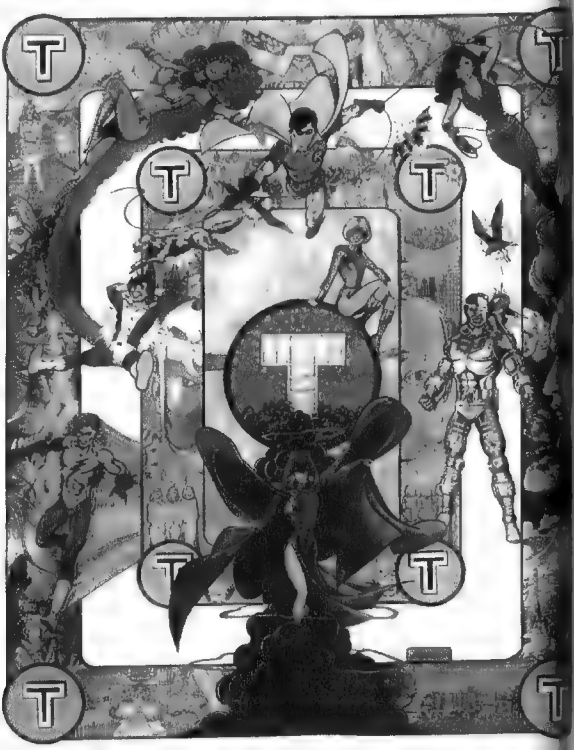
## POSTERS:

**Anti-Drug Program**, 1983 (CA)

**Heroes Convention**, 1984 (A)

**New Teen Titans: Terra Joins**
1983 (*cover NTT vol 1 #30*)

**New Teen Titans**
1983 (*cover NTT vol 2 #1*)



# INTERVIEW WITH SAM REGISTER

By Bill Walko, February 2004

## *Bringing Titans to TV*

*As senior vice president, original animation for Cartoon Network, Sam Register is responsible for overseeing development and production of original, action-oriented animated programming for the 24-hour cable service. His current projects include* Star Wars: Clone Wars *animated shorts,* Duck Dodgers *and of course,* Teen Titans. *Sam talks about his excitement in bringing Teen Titans to TV—and offers some hints about what to expect in seasons three and four—and beyond.*

**BW:** First of all, thank you for bringing Teen Titans to TV. The series has been very enjoyable. How did you get involved with *Teen Titans* the animated series?

**Sam:** Well I was a huge fan of the Wolfman/Pérez Titans and when my job moved to development the first project I wanted to do was to see if the Teen Titans were available. I called Paul Levitz and I went over to DC Comics. I asked about Teen Titans and he said it was available and that was it. It was the first thing I always wanted to do and the first thing I did.

**BW:** Why adapt Teen Titans, instead of, say, Legion?

**Sam:** I was a fan mostly; I wanted to do something a bit younger... a lot of the super-hero stuff on Cartoon Network at the time—like Justice League—was a little more adult-oriented. I knew I would have to make a show that was a really good kid's cartoon. So I thought teens and a younger-skewing hero group would be good. Also, I thought that Robin—one of the "A" characters in DC—was both an "A" character and a sidekick at the same time. I thought that he—in animation—was never anything more than a sidekick. It was also a good way of introducing characters like Cyborg, Robin, Beast Boy and Starfire—who I knew through the DC Universe but many kids seeing the show for the first time would have no idea who they were. Robin was an entry-character. Kids know who Robin is... so through Robin we are able to meet these new characters.

**BW:** Have you gotten any feedback or input from George Pérez or Marv Wolfman?

**Sam:** We have. I met with Marv a couple of times and he's been supportive of everything and thought it was very cool that we were doing it. The *Teen Titans* comic book was much more of a soap opera—which is a direct quote from Marv—and we were going in a different direction; He supported it all the way and thought it was a great way to go.

As for George... I hadn't talked to George until we had a launch party for Teen Titans at ComiCon last year in San Diego. It happened that Teen Titans was premiering the same night as the ComiCon and George and Marv were both invited to the party and they attended to watch the premiere live at a bar in San Diego. And it was packed with people. It got to meet George for the first time and it was excellent because I got to watch Marv and George watching the Teen Titans and they were just thrilled watching it together, watching their creation on TV. And I was thrilled to see these guys thrilled. And there was a lot of mutual admiration going on that night. Because I was thanking them and they were thanking me and I was thanking them and I was like "if it wasn't for you guys there would be no show" and they were like "Thanks for doing the show!"

There was one other thing that came from George. We are thinking of mining the other Titans to use as auxillary members, [and I asked], "Is there anyone you would like us to use?" and he mentioned Bumblebee. So she will be coming to the animated Titans as a request from George.

**BW:** Wow! I didn't even know he was a Bumblebee fan

**Sam:** I didn't know either until he told us.

**BW:** Was it a relief to learn they were so appreciative and supportive of the series?

**Sam:** Absolutely. You want their support and you obviously don't want them to hate it. There is a lot of stuff that we left from the comic that remains and I think we didn't change it so much that it wasn't theirs anymore. We were fans of their book and I think that comes out in the show. We didn't screw with it too much, which they appreciated.

**BW:** What is the *mission statement* of the show?

**Sam:** Well, we created something called the squint test. And as [David] Slack (the story editor)would say "If you have to think, it stinks." Which means that we really wanted to make all the characters and all the stories really clear and easy to understand. And the villain's motivations easy to understand. And the characters themselves and what kind of characters they are easy to understand.

When we say *squint*, we mean, that in art when you squint to look at something to see if it works. When you put blue and black together and you squint you can't really tell where they separate. But when you put white and black together and you squint you can still see it pop. So we wanted everything to be iconic and very black-and-white and easy to understand. And that's right down to the metaphors kids get from the stories, like the Blackfire episode which is about sibling rivalry. And there's an episode with Beast Boy about jokes going too far. All these things built into episodes that are actually relevant to kid's lives.

**BW:** Who came up with the unique look and feel for the series? Was it collaborative?

**Sam:** That was Glen. I told Glen that I was a huge fan of the Bruce Timm look and feel but I really felt they had done that so well and for so long that it was time for something new. And I was ready to switch things up. I wanted it to look completely different from a house [style] action show from Warner Brothers.

Glen came to me and showed me some anime and said "Hey, we're thinking of doing something like this" and he kind of looked at me like I was going to hate it. And I said "If that's something you feel passionate about and you think this is a cool way to do it, you should do it." You want guys to come into work and enjoy what they're doing. And it was something that Glen and his team of artists really wanted to try. They're all anime fans. And to see they were excited about it, I was was totally cool with it. But I was the one that did coin it as *Murikanime*.

**BW:** Yep, I've heard that phrase. There's always a push or challenge to *make it weirder.* Can you elaborate on that?

**Sam:** Yeah. A lot of that was that I wanted it different. Sometimes I would say "You guys are not pushing the envelope enough" and I want different. I wanted the feeling that we were seeing something weird and something different and not to hold themselves back. And they sure as hell did it. I think I pushed them as far as they can go and they started even pushing themselves back a little.

**BW:** The second season has gotten a little wackier...

**Sam:** Yeah. And that's actually the directors. There's three different directors on the show. One director went really crazy on stuff and some of the other directors... not as much. Sometimes that works and sometimes it doesn't. But Teen Titans is kind of where you can always get away with it. Kids love it. And I know there are some of the hard-core Titans fans that don't appreciate it, but that just shows that this show isn't for them. It's for their kids.

**BW:** If it's any consolation, there's been a bit of a turnaround. I think some of the fans that were dreading the show actually

sampled it and kind of turned around on it. They said "well... It's different. But I like it. It's fun. It's bouncy. But it still has what the characters are about..."

**Sam:** Exactly. When I grew up I watched the *Super-friends*. And if you try watching those stories today they are horrible shows. But at the time they didn't seem horrible. They were simple and I could totally follow what was going on. The world wasn't going to end. It was good *Superfriends* stuff. You remember... it was dumb. You look back on it now and you go "ugh." But those shows were designed for kids. And *Spider-man and His Amazing Friends* and *Superfriends*... I love those shows. And I wanted to make a show that kids are going to grow up and they're going to remember that show in the same way.

And right down to the theme song. We wanted to make a song that people are going to be singing for the rest of their lives. And make a show that people are going to remember and appreciate as nostalgic and as part of their childhood. And not as some dark thing for fan-boys.

**BW:** You've got the kid appeal, but adults can watch it too. I know people that aren't even comic fans or Titans fans and they find it entertaining.

**Sam:** That's great. That wasn't a goal. Our goal was to make kids like it first. We've heard a lot of moms like to watch it with their kids. And for a mom to want to watch an action show with their kids—well, that's something that doesn't happen a lot. But again, that was a happy accident. Never part of the plan.

**BW:** The show's got girl and boy appeal. Starfire and Raven are just as strong and powerful as the boys.

**Sam:** The very reason the girls are as strong as the boys—that was a reason why some major toy companies passed on the property. They thought the girls were too good. That's why Bandai got it. Bandai—being a Japanese company—they understood that action cartoons can be for both girls and boys. And they understood it right away.

**BW:** How did you decide which characters to use?

**Sam:** We talked a little about it. When I was first playing around with the idea I was thinking of changing up the line-up a little bit—but the original line-up was great. But Wonder Girl and Superboy were sort of out of the picture because those are different licenses within DC Comics. So with Teen Titans—which is Robin essentially—we had access to the Batman universe. But we'd have to pay a bigger licensing fee to get those other characters in because other creators are connected to those.

**BW:** And Kid Flash fits that bill as well...

**Sam:** Exactly. So at this time there are no plans at all to see Superboy, Kid Flash or Wonder Girl in any of the shows. They're not planned. I don't think it's ever going to happen.

**BW:** And with Justice League, different arrangements were made to include those characters from the onset.

**Sam:** Yeah. And we do have Aqualad—Aqualad we were allowed to use because Aqualad himself was a Teen Titan from the original Teen Titans. So they kind of gave us a little leeway on him. But Wonder Girl and Superboy and Kid Flash were out. But we're fine... they didn't really fit the type of characters we were doing either. Glen kind of refers to the Teen Titans as the Breakfast Club. There's a jock and there's a nerd and there's a goth girl, there's a princess and there's a bad boy. And that kind of worked out. We didn't need anymore for the show. And anything more than five on any team gets to be too much to deal with.

**BW:** Are there any characters you wanted to use but couldn't?

**Sam:** Nope. There are some other characters coming. Bumble-bee's coming. There are some characters from the Titans universe that are going to be showing up. In some cases, we are going to be creating some new characters just for the show that have never been seen before. And that's where Harley [Quinn] and the Wonder Twins came from—they started off as cartoons first.

**BW:** Let's touch on some of the characters; How did Robin evolve? He obviously has many character beats from Dick Grayson's character in *New Teen Titans*. With all the different Robins, which one or ones serve as inspiration for the series?

**Sam:** I'm bored with the DC universe continuity and all that crap. To me, he's just Robin. I know all the fans give a crap, but I don't. He's Robin. He wears a mask. And he used to work for Batman. And that's all I know. I don't even know who he is behind that mask. And if Glen knows, I don't want him to tell me.

He's cool because he's the one who has no super-powers on the team. He's the team leader. He was also trained by one of the best super-heroes in the world so he has some good experience.

**BW:** One of the interesting things about Robin is that he is the member that could potentially be the least powerful, but yet everyone trusts him and looks up to him and he's the unquestioned leader of the team.

**Sam:** Right. But he also has brain power. He was trained by a detective. There's more to Robin than just the big boots.

**BW:** Cyborg and Beast Boy are pretty close to their comic book counterparts. Did you change anything when adapting them for the show?

**Sam:** No, those characters are pretty straight-on. You'll notice with all the characters we didn't get too close to origins on anything. We sort of get into the girls' background a little bit. With the boys, we haven't gotten into their past. There are no plans to... but you never know.

We decided from the beginning we didn't want to get into an 'origin episode.' We're considering doing that as a direct-to-video DVD—to tell the story of how they got together. Otherwise, we see it as "they're together. We can worry about it later."

**BW:** Well, there are hints at times. Cyborg—for example—mentions how he used to be an athlete....

**Sam:** Right. But the origin of Cyborg is depressing.

**BW:** Well, all their origins are depressing. They're all orphans or have parents that died...

**Sam:** Yeah—so we're not going there. Starfire, we will be going back to her home planet on an episode and get more on her background—but not too much. Starfire's sort of like the Little Mermaid from the Disney movie. And the Little Mermaid didn't understand the surface world. Our Little Mermaid doesn't quite understand earth. And that allows for a lot of comedy. It makes her very sweet and very funny. So she's worked out pretty good.

**BW:** With Starfire, you played up her naiveté, but her passion and warrior side were toned back. Were you looking for one defining trait for each character?

**Sam:** Yeah, I mean, she's super strong. But getting into the warrior side gets into *origin* and it just hasn't really come up.

**BW:** Raven is such a dark character for such a light show. Did you find it hard to adapt her for the show?

**Sam:** We think of her as a goth girl. She's dark—but a character everyone can relate to. She's a recluse and sort of to herself. We thought that would be a good dynamic with the rest of the team. She does have a dark background in the comic. In the cartoon, there is talk about getting more into her past in the fourth season. We touched on it with Trigon, and we might do more.

**BW:** Slade in some ways is very close to the source material, and in other ways, is quite different. His look is very close to the comics, yet his motivations differ. How did you take the comic book Slade to cartoon Slade?

**Sam:** We didn't know quite was he was going to be after. We knew we needed an enemy. And in the first season, we decided he wanted an apprentice and it was sort of a Luke-and-Darth thing. And he was called Deathstroke in the comic and we can't use the word *death* so we went with his first name. So we wanted to keep him mysterious and dark and sort of the uber-villain. And he's worked out great. And he looks pretty much like *The Old One* too [from the episode "Forces of Nature"]. Again, not getting too much into his past. And no plans on getting there.

**BW:** You've also described Slade as a "Bad Batman."

**Sam:** At the time it was to make him a father-figure to Robin but as the things you don't like about your dad.

**BW:** Any reason why you haven't unmasked Slade?

**Sam:** It's a mystery thing. It's fun. It keeps you guessing. Just like you never saw who Dr. Claw was on *Inspector Gadget*. A lot of things in these decisions, there isn't some master grand plan why we do things and why we don't.

**BW:** Some people have tried to deduce who Slade is; As if it's going to be somebody we know. Some fans thought he was Bruce Wayne testing Robin.

**Sam:** I'll put it this way: I think Slade Wilson is Slade Wilson. And I don't know what his reasons are.

**BW:** How does the creative process work? How do you break down each season and each episode?

**Sam:** Before each season we have a meeting about the story arc. We decide what we want in the larger arc and how we want to plan that out. Like how we want to tell the Terra story, for how many episodes, how many we're going to need with Terra in it. I think she's in four or five episodes. After that it's a lot of one-offs.

There are episodes we all want to do. Like I wanted to do Thunder and Lightning. And then Glen will have an episode he wants to do. And then an artist will come up with an episode. The writers have episodes they want to do. Usually we're for everything. There's always something someone has a passion for. That's about it. Then they write outlines and there's an approval process. But we're hands-off at Cartoon Network to let the creators have as much freedom and as much as fun as they want.

**BW:** Season Two is tackling the classic Judas Contract story. It's ambitious to retell that story in a cartoon geared towards kids. Can you tell us about why you decided to adapt that story—and what challenges it presented?

**Sam:** We chose that because of all the Wolfman/Pérez stories, that was probably the best story that they did. It was one I remembered. I talked to Marv and he said, at the time Kitty Pryde was really big on the X-Men. And they wanted to do an evil version of Kitty. And that's where Terra came from. From day one, when they greenlit the show, me and Glen knew we wanted to do Terra. So second season is when we decided to do it.

There was some issues with how bad we could make Terra—and how we end it. Obviously, it comes to a pretty sad end in the comics. So how do we end it in the cartoon so it still means something, but maybe isn't as violent. And how to deal with having her smoke and drink which she did in the comic—we couldn't do that, obviously.

But other than that, it was a very simple story about betrayal. And you didn't have to change too much to make the idea of betrayal work for the show.

**BW:** One thing I thought worked for the show that they didn't do in the comics is that you see more of Terra before she goes bad. You see more of the potential of the girl she could have been.

**Sam:** Yeah, for the Beast Boy and Terra relationship to work we really needed to not make her completely evil—otherwise it wouldn't have worked. And we have a shorter time to tell a story than they do in the comic books. We can't write as much as they wrote in the books.

**BW:** Are there any comics characters or stories from *New Teen Titans* where you said "Yeah, we HAVE to do this!"

**Sam:** Ummm.. other than the Thunder and Lightning story—which we did—and the Judas Contract.... Well, there wasn't so much. As I said, we are probably going to explore some other Trigon episode ideas. Other than that, it's just that Wolfman and Pérez gave us some really great characters to play with to tell a lot of great stories with.

**BW:** Each season has a specific arc with a serious tone, and then stand-alone episodes that are sometimes serious, and sometimes all-out comedy. Is there a formula or ratio?

**Sam:** It's an action show first. We like to do one or two crazy episodes a season, absolutely. Usually we like to dedicate four or five episodes to the arc itself with a two part ending at the end of the season. And that's about it. And the rest are one-offs. We do push for them to do the goofy one.

In the fourth season, I asked them to do a mystery episode where they will get pre-approval from me on outline and story. But I am not going to look at story boards or go to the record[ing session] or anything. And I am going to watch that episode on TV with them when it airs. I want them to surprise me.

**BW:** One of the goofy episodes I thought was very creative was the Mad Mod episode. It not only had goofy fun things for kids, but it had a lot of things for adults. You put in a lot of little references. There's some nods to *Clockwork Orange* and some other stuff. Are you looking to do more episodes in that vein as well?

**Sam:** I think there's one in the second season that's going to be a real fun alternate reality episode. They're planning another Mad Mod for season three. There's a pretty crazy Mumbo episode coming in season three. We like to do the weird ones. And I think it's good for them to really push themselves and try something new. We like to do is surprise people. We want them to tune in because they aren't quite sure what they're going to get. If every show is the same kind of straight-ahead adventure with a beginning, middle and end—I think you may not want to check out what's on Teen Titans this week. These crazy episodes—even switching out the Japanese and English versions of the song—that's us keeping kids on their toes.

**BW:** Any more scripts from Marv Wolfman coming up?

**Sam:** I think so. I'm pretty sure he's planning on doing some more.

**BW:** How far ahead do you plan the series? Are you already breaking down fourth season?

**Sam:** We are delivering the third season right now. And the fourth season is being plotted out even as we speak.

**BW:** The series has been a tremendous success for Cartoon Network and has been ordered for four seasons. What does the future hold for *Teen Titans* beyond that?

**Sam:** Well, there's talk of a direct-to-video. There's different things they could do there. There's a possibility of an origin to be told in that... maybe we'll try something else. And then after that, I don't know. I think there's always a possibility of a fifth season. I'm reluctant to do a fifth season but it's not completely my decision obviously. But I think after the fourth season Glen and his team will have done a great job and I think that we should put those guys on a new show. Possibly four seasons and a DVD and we're done.

**BW:** Will you be bringing in even more characters from the comic books in the future?

**Sam:** We're doing that in the third season. Speedy's going to show up. And Bumblebee's going to show up. And there's some other lesser characters from the Teen Titans universe that make an appearance here and there. Some original characters. There's not a big goal to go back to the comics and see what we can get.

I mean, I'm thinking out loud right now.. maybe the only way to do a fifth season is completely change out the roster. And maybe we get on out hands and knees and ask DC if we could use Wonder Girl and Kid Flash. Get rid of some characters and bring in some new ones.

**BW:** One thing I've noticed is that people who aren't familiar with the comic are shocked when they see the characters that inspired the cartoon. Like Starfire...

**Sam:** With her big 80s hair? Well, yeah, it's funny because the animated version is now becoming what everyone is going to be thinking about Teen Titans. Because millions of people are seeing it.

**BW:** Television gets far more exposure than comic books ever will. Sam, thanks for your time today. Is anything else you'd like add before we wrap up?

**Sam:** Just that Marv and George obviously created something that touched us as fans and we felt like we wanted to go back and redo it. That's an amazing thing that you can make something like that in a comic book. It had such an effect that we actually really wanted to go back and do it again. So that's very cool.

# INTERVIEW WITH GLEN MURAKAMI

By Bill Walko, February 2004

## *Drawing Inspiration*

*It's Glen Murakami—Producer of Teen Titans the animated series—in perhaps his most comprehensive TEEN TITANS interview ever. Glen takes some time to talk about how he translated the classic New Teen Titans to TV—infusing it with his own unique vision—and preserving his love for the original characters.*

**BW:** First of all, I'm a huge fan of the Titans and I really like what you've done with the characters. The series is a lot of fun. How did you get involved with *TEEN TITANS the animated series*?

**Glen:** I was working on *Justice League* at the time and Sam [Register] came aboard as VP of Cartoon Network. Sam and I are about the same age and one of the things he wanted to develop was the Teen Titans. It was something he always wanted to do. So he said "Here's something I really want to develop and here's some stuff I had in mind." And I said "Well, do you want to do something really different with it? I think you should go in this direction with it." I thought the direction they were going was really different from the Wolfman/Pérez comic, but I thought it could be even weirder than say, what we were doing on *Justice League*.

**BW:** Was your idea to bring some of the Japanese influences?

**Glen:** I just thought that language of storytelling really hadn't been done in a Western style superhero comic or cartoon. I mean, we've been seeing that Japanese and Manga influence in comics, but I've never seen anyone that went that far with it in a cartoon.

**BW:** Right. And pairing that with traditional DC superheroes is certainly something that hadn't been done before.

**Glen:** And the direction was to really do something quite different from *Justice League*. So we kind of went around and around on it. I grew up reading Titans and X-Men in the 80s—they were the two hot books. So [George] Pérez and [John] Byrne were probably the two biggest influences on me during that time period. Before I even got into animation I wanted to be a comic book artist.

**BW:** How did you go about adapting the Teen Titans for animation? How did you decide which characters to use?

**Glen:** Well, I think a lot of people don't realize that comics and animation are really apples and oranges. It would be really, really complicated to animate something like Pérez's Cyborg design. Just the detail, complexity and subtley of it. There's just no way we could do that on a TV show schedule with a TV show budget. You kind of just have to take the best parts of it. You have to know what to keep and what to throw out. And it's really difficult. In some ways, you can't be too close to it—you have to distance yourself from it and realize you're doing it for another medium.

So we tried to take the best of the Wolfman and Pérez stuff and distill it down into 20 minutes. And do it for fans who have never seen the Titans before, taking into consideration that maybe they are only going to see one episode. You don't have time for back-stories or all the subtleties of their secret identities or their origins. So you have to make the characters really, really super-iconic.

**BW:** And part of the success of the Wolfman/Pérez Titans was seeing these characters grow and come into their own—which is something you won't have the benefit of doing.

**Glen:** Exactly. It's sort of the difference between the movie and the novel. I think sometimes fans don't understand that dilemma we're in. I grew up reading Titans and Pérez's Avengers stuff. I'm a fan of that stuff—but at the same time—I have all these other things I have to take into consideration to adapt it.

**BW:** Did you design all the characters?

**Glen:** I designed all the new versions of the characters.

**BW:** I'd like to touch upon each of the characters. What did you take and leave, visually, from the comic book Robin?

**Glen:** I wanted to make Robin cool. I think when we talked about Robin in the beginning, we were concerned that everyone's perception of Robin. That he would always be thought of in terms of "Batman and Robin." Robin always has that 'and' attached to the front of his name. So whenever you show anyone a picture of Robin they always ask "Well, when is Batman going to show up?"

**BW:** And people have asked that...

**Glen:** And that really bothered me. I didn't want Robin to just be the little kid who gets into trouble. I don't want him to seem like he needs the father-figure. I don't want him to just be the sidekick. So we talked about how we could make him really cool. And I made everyone to look sort of awkward, like teenagers. They have big hands, big feet and big heads—they're kind of gangly and scrawny. I thought that awkwardness made them look kind of anime.

I just didn't want them super-buff like the *Justice League* characters. I wanted them to have a clumsy quality about them. And like all teenagers, they would really be into footwear. Big clod-hopper shoes. That's why I gave him steel-toe combat boots. The spiky hair. I wanted to get rid of the shorts. I just wanted him cooler. Like a Bruce Lee or something like that. I just didn't want him to copy Batman. I wanted him to be his own person.

**BW:** Although there are no secret identities, it seems Robin is strongly modeled after Dick Grayson. Is that where you draw inspiration from or is he an amalgam of different Robins?

**Glen:** Well, the reason we never got into the secret identities and stuff like that is it just gets really complicated. Instead of all the characters having one name, they now had two names. We just felt that would get confusing.

It was really important to me that kids watching it could identify with characters. And I thought that the minute you start giving them secret identities, kids couldn't project themselves onto the characters anymore. I know it's kind of important to have secret identities and stuff like that but we wanted everything to be really iconic. Like, "Oh, there's the robot guy. There's the alien girl. There's the witch girl. There's the shape-changing boy." We just wanted it really clean like that, like old Star Trek. We just wanted it simple.

When I was growing up, I didn't like the old Adam West *Batman*. But I did want more humor in the series. I was struggling with how you do a show with more humor in it without it being a parody. I didn't want to make fun of the characters. Because I think as a kid, the *Superfriends* and the Adam West *Batman* drove me nuts—they didn't make sense to me. Because then I read the comics and I didn't understand why the characters were so much cooler.

And then watching the cartoons, they seemed like old guys. And that always really bothered me. So I wanted to take some of that Adam West stuff, but do it so it's not a parody.

**BW:** I think of *Teen Titans* as an action-comedy, whereas *Justice League* is an action-drama. Even though there's comedy, there's also jeopardy and action and moments with real heart.

**Glen:** Well, I think the humor is there to make the characters likeable. I think when the characters were created in the 1980's version, that was just the direction of comics at the time. It was difficult to take that aspect of the comic. To look at it and say "Well, I think maybe those characters skew a little too old." We were making something for a younger audience. How can we take the good aspects of something like *Justice League* but do something different? It's difficult to take all those elements and boil them down.

**BW:** Well, I think what comes through is the essence of the characters. It's all sort of been stripped down and streamlined.

**Glen:** That's important for me that fans understand that. It's not like "We're going to change the designs just to change the designs."

**BW:** Well, even in the comics, the secret identities don't play a part. I mean, they aren't two separate people like Bruce Wayne/Batman. Dick Grayson is essentially Robin. Starfire doesn't really have a secret identity. Raven doesn't have one.

**Glen:** That's pretty much why we didn't go in that direction. The whole "Who's Robin?" controversy is really kind of interesting. My big concern is just trying to make Robin cool... just really set Robin apart from Batman. So if it seems like I'm avoiding the question, I sort of am. Because I don't think it's really important. My concern is how do I make Robin a really strong lead character without all that other stuff. I feel that way about all the characters.

**BW:** You talked about how Cyborg's original design was too complicated for animation. So how did you go about developing Cyborg?

**Glen:** My biggest concern with Cyborg is how to make him look like a robot without looking clunky. I wanted his overall silhouette to look human. I didn't want him to look like he just had robotic limbs. That was my biggest problem. That's how I ended up with those clear parts. He kind of has a real Micronaut look.

I grew up watching a live-action Japanese show called **Kikaida** and I think subconsciously I channeled that too. I'm realizing that a lot of stuff with Titans is stuff I grew up with. All those shows I watched as kid mixed with all the comics that I liked.

**BW:** So does that mean you subconsciously channeled *The Munsters* when designing Beast Boy?

**Glen:** That was something that everyone brought up "Oh, he looks like Eddie Munster." But I don't think that was really conscious. I was just trying to match the name more so when you look at him you go, "Oh, Okay. That makes sense." I just thought doing a normal boy who was green just didn't fit the name enough.

That was the thing with all the characters. How much do we exaggerate them? Even color-wise.. that's why I changed the color on some of them; Raven, she's the blue one... Beast Boy, he's the green one... Each of the characters have two colors but I tried not to repeat any of the colors on any of the other characters so they'll set apart from each other. Starfire is the orange and purple one. Raven is the blue and black one. Cyborg is the white and blue one.

**BW:** Raven's another character who emerged differently from the comic book. Was it problematic adapting such a dark character?

**Glen:** No. I think I used all the elements of the character's costumes. I was just trying to strip it all down. That dress that Raven wears in the comic is just too complicated. In the comics, there's always that drawing of her with that split dress and her leg sticking out. I just chopped that off. I just changed it to a leotard.

So I think if you look at all the characters' costumes I kept sort of the basic elements of everything. I mean, I think Beast Boy's costume is the Beast Boy costume—I just made it black and a purplish-red color rather than just red. I didn't want it to compete with Robin.

And Starfire's costume—I think I kept the elements. I just tried to keep the elements of everything. I'm looking at a picture of both of them now comparing them... I can't honestly tell you why I went in that direction. I think I was just like "Oh, I'll keep the armband, keep the color scheme.." I didn't think it was appropriate to give Starfire flaming hair. I just thought that wasn't such a good idea: a character whose hair is on fire. I just didn't think that was a good idea for a kid's cartoon. I think I kept the essence of the character. I just made them all younger.

**BW:** Oh... you did give Star pupils rather than the blank eyes. Was that to make her more expressive for animation?

**Glen:** Yeah. But when she gets all charged up she gets the glowing green eyes. I mean things like that were the reasons we made some of the decisions we did. I definitely started there... then I was like, "Well, you need to take this out, and this out... this won't animate.... This is too complicated..."

**BW:** How did you come up with the design for Terra?

**Glen:** I just felt like I wanted to make her more contemporary.

**BW:** She was probably due for an update from her original look.

**Glen:** And I sorta felt like kids nowadays dressed like super-heroes more than ever before. You can go into Hollywood and see kids who are flashier-looking than super-heroes. Kids dress like anime characters now. That's my whole theory on the Titans. I wanted them to look like they were wearing super-hero costumes, yet at the same time I knew I wanted to do this thing where they were super-heroes 24 hours a day. They would go to the movies wearing their costumes. To me, I thought that was cool. They were so much 'their character' that they just lived that way. Their costumes were their personalities.

**BW:** And no one reacts to it either. No one thinks it's strange that they are at a party in their costumes or whatever.

**Glen:** I think if you're a kid and you want to be a super-hero, you don't ever want to go back to being normal. I think you'd want to be a super-hero 24 hours a day if you could. So that was the thinking—if that makes any sense at all.

**BW:** Now: Deathstroke. You've kept that recognizable mask—which works well ...

**Glen:** Actually, I tried to change the costume. I tried to go in different directions.—but I felt the more I went in different directions, the more it wasn't Slade.

**BW:** Any reason he hasn't been unmasked yet?

**Glen:** I just think it's cooler. My same theory about no doing secret identities. I just think it's cooler—to keep the bad guy a secret. I just don't think that's ultimately what the stories are about.

**BW:** Some thought he might be Bruce Wayne testing Robin.

**Glen:** That's funny. I think I can say exactly what stuff is and people would still come up with different theories.

I guess when I go through the comics now and look at them, I am sort of surprised at how many of the elements we have done.

**BW:** Oh, there's a lot of little bits and pieces that creep in.

**Glen:** I think after awhile I just forget. I was picking up the comics the other day and I noticed I had changed the color of Starfire's starbolts. And I think I just made the connection that if her eyes glow green, then the power she shoots out would be green. But in the comic, they're magenta. So I'm like "Oh, I didn't remember that."

I don't know if I made a conscious decision to change it. After awhile everything just seems to blend together. We were going through things the other day, and I had forgotten that Terra had that first costume. And we actually have her making those costume changes.

We didn't copy it, but it's interesting that in the back of my mind I thought "Oh, when we first see her, she won't have this costume... and then she'll get this costume [when she joins]." Things like that.. I don't know if I remembered that, or that it's just so subconscious now.

**BW:** She has goggles now in the comics, too... the second Terra. I don't know if you're aware of that.

**Glen:** Oh, really? I just thought it would be cool. See, that's the thing. It gets to the point that I don't know if I saw it somewhere, I don't know if I remembered that.

**BW:** Some characters look very much like their comic book counterparts, like Slade or Mammoth... while others are drastically different, like Jinx or Gizmo. When you go about adopting the classic characters, do you always go to the source material?

**Glen:** We talk about the villains being all adults. We talked about different ways of doing it. I dunno... Gizmo as a little kid seemed funnier. Making them relateable just seemed more interesting. It wasn't like "We're going to change it just to change it." We wanted to talk about the story and figure out how it works.

Same thing with Jinx. Let's make her more goth. It's this blend of how to make it a little more anime... how to make it a little more contemporary... how to make it more iconic... I think we wanted to make Jinx similar to Raven but different than Raven. It's a back-and-forth process that—after awhile—I forget exactly why we made a decision.

**BW:** Which designs for *Teen Titans* are you most proud of?

**Glen:** When David Slack [the story editor] and I were going over the series in the very beginning, we were trying to talk about the characters' flaws—because that's really important to build character. I think we were still scratching our heads wondering if we got it quite right yet.

But when we did the casting and we recorded the first episode and we heard all the actors together, suddenly everything came to life. All the characters had their voices. That's kind of the thing I'm happiest with I just that it all really gelled. I think we have a really great cast. And I think all the characters have really distinct, individual personalities. That, I think, makes the characters more than just visually just a design. I think it's a combination of everything. It's the writing. It's all the aspects of it that breathe life into the characters.

**BW:** Are there any Titans characters you haven't gotten a chance to adapt yet that you'd really like to use?

**Glen:** I think we talk about everything. We always go "What about this character? What about this character?" I think it's about figuring out what's organic to the series. We don't want to stick in characters just to stick them in.

I was glad that we did Blackfire. And I thought it was funny to do it in that kind of *I Dream Of Jeannie/Bewitched* way. I thought it was cool to do that with the characters. And again, how do we take this big dramatic Blackfire story arc—how do we do that and distill it all down into one episode? And I think we did it. I think you get it; You instantly understand their relationship. I think we held true to the character—but we just crammed it all into 22 minutes.

**BW:** Well, I think the core of their relationship comes through: the sibling rivalry, their antagonistic relationship. And this is also from the comics. Starfire just keeps giving Blackfire a second chance and Blackfire always comes back and tries to kill her again.

**Glen:** Yeah, if you think about it, it's kind of funny.

**BW:** Right. And at the end of the episode, even as Blackfire is swearing revenge, Starfire just says, "It was still very good to see you." I mean, that's the essenese of their relationship.

**Glen:** Yeah. I think we're the Cliff's Notes version of the comics.

**BW:** Do you collaborate with the head writers on the show? How do you break down a typical story?

**Glen:** I think our main goal has been telling stories that relate to our audience—and not get bogged down in comic book lore. And that's what we go back and forth on with the stories. That's when we go back to the Titans comic to find the messages and the morals in it without being too *After School Special*. We want the stories to have action and drama but we also want it to have heart. Those were the main goals in the beginning when we talked about doing the show.

The show just isn't going to mean anything if you don't like these characters—and if you cant relate to the characters.

**BW:** Right. *Justice League* is about those big save-the-universe battles, but *Teen Titans* has always been about the characters—you care what happens to them. Most of their conflicts are tied to something personal. Raven and Trigon. Blackfire and Starfire. The whole Terra story.

**Glen:** I think that's why it was really important to ask "What are their problems?" Another reason I didn't want the characters to have secret identities was because I thought if they became too special or too super, you just couldn't relate to them anymore.

**BW:** Yeah. As you mentioned, they have their flaws.

**Glen:** Right. And it's all things kids go through. They're all problems you go through at puberty or adolescence. When we did *Batman* it was cool because no one was taking superheroes and playing them that way. No one was playing them that straight with that much drama. And Batman is a cool character—but I just thought you can't take that same roadmap and stick the Titans into it. So a bank robbery or a charity function—I just thought kids can't relate to that.

I mean the Titans are going to fight crime—but HOW are they going to fight crime? We wanted the problems to stem from them.

**BW:** Well, there's a mix; Sometimes they get that 'crime-stopping' alert—and sometimes trouble finds them.

**Glen:** I think a lot of times people complain our stories are thin—but I object to that. I think we pare the stories down so they're more about those emotional things rather than sometimes the logic or "Well, how did this character do this"—or "where does this guy get his powers from?" I think sometimes maybe it seems sloppy—but I think it's meant to be more entertaining than exacting.

The stories are more character-driven and they're more about the mood or feel—than about all that other stuff.

**BW:** Marv Wolfman and George Pérez attended the premiere of the show at San Diego. Did you get a chance to talk to them?

**Glen:** We just talked to Marv the other day. We did a convention in Pasadena and Marv was there. From the very beginning Marv said "I completely understand why you guys have changed this. If we were doing Titans today, I wouldn't have done it the same way."

Bruce Timm was at that party, and he told me that he saw them watching it together. I was at one end of the room and they were somewhere else—so I didn't get a chance to talk to George. I dunno. I

guess I am kinda curious what his thoughts are about the show. I heard he liked it.

**BW:** I believe I had read somewhere that he did like it. I was just curious if you were able to touch base with him.

**Glen:** In some ways, I think I'm afraid to... "Hey—I took your babies and I changed them!" I mean, I grew up reading their comics. I remember the Pérez Avengers, when he was doing *Fantastic Four*, that X-Men Annual he did.... I couldn't wait for that X-Men/Titans crossover. I remember all that stuff. The Justice League/Avengers crossover and all the fan magazines that would print the pencils from it. Are they using any of that art in the new crossover?

**BW:** No, it's all new.

**Glen:** See, that's too bad. I remember seeing the pencils from that. And *Crisis* was a big deal. I mean, I am a comic fan. I wonder if people realize that. Titans is a comic I grew up reading—and Pérez was one of the guys I wanted to be like.

**BW:** Do you ever pay any attention to the fan feedback on the series on the message boards?

**Glen:** I do and I don't. I try not to get too involved with it because I don't want it to skew my decision-making. I'm interested in what they have to say, but I don't want to get so caught up in it that it will change my decision making—where I'll start second-guessing myself. So it's really difficult—how much do you listen and how much do you tune out?

**BW:** Well, reaction's been pretty good. Some people that thought they would hate it have come around to liking it. Some people wish it was more like the comic book. Some people won't be converted, but the show isn't for them.

**Glen:** I *completely* understand that—it's not like I'm *not* sympathetic to that. I'm glad people *are* fans of it. In the beginning, I knew I wanted to take this radical departure—I was really pushing to make it different but at the same time, it was really hard to reassure everybody "Hey look, I'm gonna change it. But trust me I'm not gonna change it so much that you're going to hate it." It was really hard in the beginning to tell people that.

So in the very beginning people would ask "How do you describe the show?" and I didn't know how to describe it because I knew how different I was going to make it. Now that you see the show, you say "Oh, it makes sense." But in the beginning, if I told you the premise for the Blackfire episode, you would have said, "Oh, that sounds stupid. How can you take this epic story and turn it into a big joke?"

So how do I tell people, "Don't worry. I'm taking it all and I'm gonna pare it all down into this one thing."

**BW:** I also like the fact that the show surprises even long-time fans. In the Terra arc, she doesn't start off corrupted. She's actually confused, and it appears that Slade puts her on this dark path.

**Glen:** Well, it goes back to what we said in the beginning. You really have to care about these characters for it to have any kind of drama. So you have to see how funny Beast Boy is. You have to see him with faults, to really get a range of character. That's the goal behind all the characters. You have to like them.

I think we try to keep the best of the comics. Still keep it fresh. Still keep it a surprise. With Batman we had 40 years and many different interpretations of the Batman character to say, "Here's the Batman we're going to do." I think with Titans, it's harder because the Wolfman and Pérez stuff was so specific. So I think we're having a tougher time maybe with the fans than with Batman. That was a challenge from the very beginning. People have such a strong opinion and impression of these characters because that series was so strong.

In the beginning, I explained to people that we're taking a bit of the Nick Cardy Titans. That 60's feel but sticking the Wolfman and Pérez characters into it. I think that's kind of an accurate description of it.

**BW:** Well, *Teen Titans* has been a major success for Cartoon Network. Do you feel Teen Titans has been a major turning point for you?

**Glen:** I guess so. It's the first time I've really had to run a show on my own. I think working for Bruce [Timm] all that time on *Batman*, *Superman* and *Justice League*—I think I learned a lot.

I worked really hard to make something different. To do something you haven't seen done with superheroes before.

**BW:** Well, I think we've covered everything. Anything else you'd like to add before we wrap up, Glen?

**Glen:** I don't know that I need to say anymore geeky, gushing things about George [laughs].

I just learned how different comics were from animation. So I think the most important thing I want people to understand is that I come from there too and I respect that stuff—but working in this different medium I'm sort of forced to take the stuff they like about George's drawings... and have to kind of... leave them out. And that's the thing I feel funny about. I feel I'm sort of "anti-what-the-Titans-are-about"—at least, visually. I see those aspects he put into the characters, and then I have to remove them all. Being in a publication about George Pérez, I feel a little awkward about that. [laughs]

And there's no way we could have done the series without those characters.

# THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR

By Bill Walko

*Ignorance is bliss. That's the old saying. And a truer word was never spoken when considering the George Pérez Titans stories that never happened. Any Titans fan worth their blinking communicator would salivate at the thought of George Pérez returning to the Titans. So contemplating these near-miss Titans stories is an exercise in exquisite torture. Marv Wolfman was kind enough to fill in the blanks on some of these if-only titantic tales. All you sado-masochist Titans fans, read on...*

**X-Men/New Teen Titans #2**

*Marvel and DC Present the Uncanny X-Men and the New Teen Titans* #1 was printed in 1982. It featured a story by Jim Shooter, Louise Jones, Len Wein and Chris Claremont—and art by Walter Simonson. In the story, the X-Men and the Teen Titans joined forces against Darkseid, Deathstroke the Terminator and Dark Phoenix. Teaming up the most popular teams from Marvel and DC was a resounding success.

The second crossover was announced in the *New Teen Titans* #29 letters page: "We hereby announce the next *Teen Titans/X-Men* meeting, scheduled for Christmas 1983, this time produced by DC, drawn by George Pérez and written by me, Marv Wolfman. If you're interested in making suggestions as to who the villains should be, please hurry. We're going to begin working on the story any week now. And since we really liked Chris's, Walt's and Terry's work on number one, our job is going to be even harder."

The next mention of the team-up was in *New Teen Titans* #38 letter's page: "The second Titans/X-Men team-up will be published later this year if schedules are willing. George will be drawing it and Marv will write. It should be a goodie. One advanced bit of info is the villains: Brother Blood and The Hellfire Club. Interested now?" Yes, we were, Marv. But unfortunately, we'd never see the second team-up. It was eventually scrapped because of a fall-out between Marvel and DC concerning JLA/Avengers, which was also being planned at this time.

Today, Marv does recall a little of what was planned: "I hadn't worked out the story because I almost never do until it's necessary. If I'm plotting a series, I plot out in advance the characters' movement but not the specifics of the plot. I would have actually plotted the story had we been given the go-ahead. All I worked out in advance was the villains and that it would be a darker story than the first crossover."

**New Teen Titans [almost] meet the Legion**

The letters columns were such a tease back in the day. I suppose with the success of New Teen Titans, many different specials were bandied about. Here's another from *New Teen Titans* #33 letter's page, in Marv Wolfman's own

George's art from DC Sampler #2.

words: " [... ] it's interesting that you mention *The Legion of Super-Heroes* as one of your favorite comics. Paul Levitz and I have been conferring of late about the possibilities of a Titans/Legion crossover—not in either of our regular books, but as a special-sized magazine to come out sometime next year. Paul and I would plot it together. Paul doing the Legion dialogue. I would write the Titans, and if their schedules work out—Keith Giffen to draw the Legion while George Pérez illustrates the Titans. We're still only discussing this, but we'd be interested in hearing what you people have got to say."

**Titans West**

George Pérez discussed another Titan story idea in *Comics Feature* #19, 1982. The Titans as a Western? George had a thought about that: "I wanted to do a story with the Titans out west. The Titans wouldn't work out west; I just wanted to do a western thing. They just did it with the JLA anyway. But I just wanted to do something in the west. When I think about it, the story would not work with Raven there. In fact, we'd have one person with a half metal face, one guy with green skin, one person who looks totally lost because she never wears anything except that long slit dress, and, of course, a girl with hair like a giant lion's mane and green eyes—you couldn't ever make them conspicuous enough that they can look in wonder at the wild west characters, when it's going to be the wild west characters looking at them. I wanted them to be inconspicuous until it was time for them to get into action, but it's impossible to do that with those characters. So it's just one of those dreams that didn't work."

**The Deathstroke Face-Off**

From the same interview, George had an intriguing idea for a Deathstroke tale: "There were some times where I just had an idea for a cover and hoped that somebody would think of a story where I could get to use that cover. (Laughs) I thought of one cover idea where the scene is a cemetery-you know, gnarled trees and twisted decay—and, on the tombstones scattered about, are the names of all the Titans save Robin. And Robin is standing totally in tatters at this point, and standing in the distance—like the opening scenes in GUNSMOKE—you can see the arm and the leg of the Terminator, saying, 'Okay, Robin, I've terminated the others, You're the last one.' And I said, 'I wish I could do a story based on this! The idea of just being able to draw the cover. The story be damned—I just want to draw the cover!' Marv is thinking on how we're going to handle a story like that now. Because we're thinking; 'The next time we introduce the Terminator, let's actually defeat the guy. He's managed to make a fool of the Titans both times he's shown up. He's appeared twice, also, and never once has he been shown fully on the cover. One of the better villains and he's never appeared on the covers."

Well, that fact was rectified soon enough. As the Judas Contract heated up, Deathstroke was featured on several covers—including the memorable *New Teen Titans* #34.

**The DC Sampler: Truths Revealed**

A DC Comics Sampler was published in 1983 which featured a double-page spread of the Titans. George was busy working on *Crisis* with Marv Wolfman at the time. The Sampler page was drawn before many story details were ironed out. An interview with Andy Mangels in *Comics Interview* #50 [1987] revealed some information about what had been altered.

There was a woman in a light blue and red costume that was intended to be Frances Kane. Although that costume was never used, Fran's eventual Magenta costume had some similarities to the original Pérez design. George explains: " Actually, her name was, at the time, something like... I don't remember now. Originally it was supposed to be Francis Kane. There were a lot of plans for that sampler, which was done just before I ended up leaving the *Titans* book, including a black woman as opposed to the Japanese woman who ended up in *Crisis*. For all the plans that Marv and I had, once I left, Marv went his way and the super-powered Francis Kane never quite got anywhere."

George also explains why the new Doctor Light was changed from a black woman to an Japanese woman: "Well, be-

cause of the Captain Marvel character over at Marvel, it was becoming too much of a cliche; already, they had one major character who was originally a white male superhero and now became a black female super-heroine - and whose power also had something to do with light or energy. When doing the new Dr. Light, we did want to make a female; since we were killing so many females, we needed a new one. I came up with the thing of her becoming Japanese, and Marv liked the idea, he had no problem with that. So that's why Dr. Light became a Japanese."

**Azrael**

George Pérez also did some preliminary designs for the Azrael character. But Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez did his own designs when he took over art chores from George on the *New Teen Titans*. Jose's Azrael design was the one that was eventually used for the character.

**Kole's a Dude?**

Look like the original plans for the female crystal spinner, Kole, were quite different. Here's what George had to say in *Focus on George Pérez* in 1984: "...Cole, a new member of the Teen Titans. He isn't even going to appear until issue #9 of the Teen Titans Baxter book." Seems like a few things changed in developing Kole!

**New Teen Titans: The Animated Series**

The New Teen Titans almost made it to Saturday mornings back in 1983. *Comics Scene Magazine* #11 [1983] reported that a series was indeed pitched to the networks:

"[The networks announced] schedules for the fall season, beginning September 17 [1983], and for the second year in a row, adventure shows were replaced by programming favoring 'cute' characters. A glance at the three different schedules shows the 10 new shows are predominantly filled with loveable people - a move to counter the phenomenal success of NBC's *The Smurfs*. Correspondent Darrell McNeil reports; "The Teen Titans series would have been produced by Hanna-Barbera for ABC but was aced out in favor of the continuing search for a Smurf-like success story. A shame too, because the series' story proposals promised a real treat for Titans fans, Basically, all the Titans would be present, except for Terra and Robin (who's on detached service to Super Friends). Wonder Girl would have been group leader and storylines would have promised appearances from Trigon and Blackfire."

The character designs had already been completed for a 30-second anti-drug commercial. Those same designs - based on Pérez's original character art—would have been used for the proposed series.

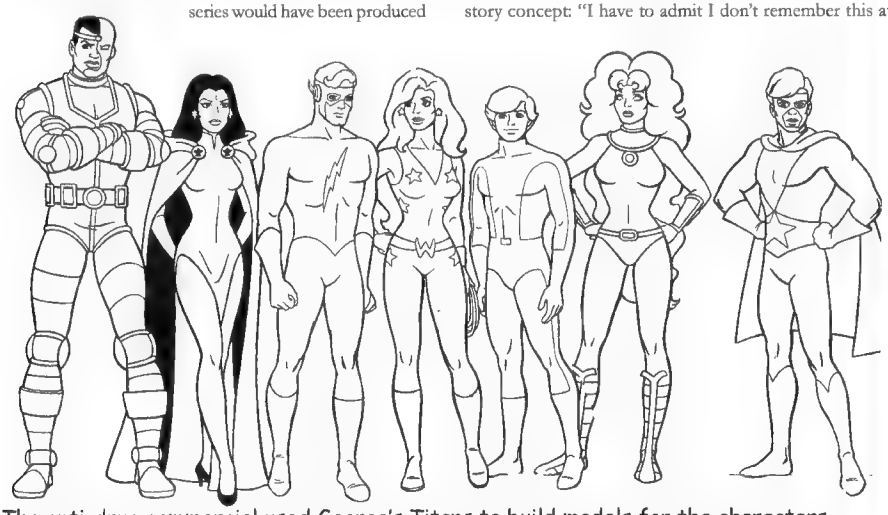
Marv Wolfman recalls pitching the series: "I don't know how far the 1980s *Titans* show went. What I remember was I went to [Hanna-Barbera] with Len Wein and Jeanette Khan and I pitched both *Titans* and *Dial 'H' For Hero*, and then I went home. They were interested, but eventually passed. The people who would've worked on the show were Jeff Scott and Alan Burnett who at that time were partners. I assume I would have worked on it, too."

It would take twenty years to see the New Teen Titans in their own series. *Teen Titans* premiered on Cartoon Network in 2003.

**The Changeling Comedy Special**

Here's an idea that sounds like it could have been a lot of fun. In *Amazing Heroes Preview Special*, Marv Wolfman explains: "Because of the lateness of the book, we may extend Tales one or two more issues before we go reprint. We need 12 issues." Due to the circumstances, these "vamp-for-time" issues are still unscheduled and unassigned, though Rich Buckler has done two more issues to (all between #56 and #59. However they fall, plans remain for the final new issue of the book to be a comedy issue pencilled by Pérez, which Wolfman explains is "Changeling's version of a Teen Titans story, which will come off as a spoof of the whole series."

Marv was a little foggy on remembering this particular story concept: "I have to admit I don't remember this at



The anti-drug commercial used George's Titans to build models for the characters.

all. But if I talked about it I would have written it. But this one is off the radar."

**Titans West That Wasn't**

In 1988, Marv Wolfman set the stage for a new Titans West. *The New Teen Titans* had an adventure with Chris [Dial 'H'] King and Red Star. At the same time, Sarah Charles relocated to the West Coast, and Vic Stone thought about moving with her. Those three would have comprised the core of the Titans West team.

Marv Wolfman notes, in an interview in *Amazing Heroes* #135: "I was talking about the West Coast version of the book, that would be in San Francisco. [...] DC wants to do a West Coast Teen Titans. In the last run of the book, before I did it, it was Titans East and Titans West. It was a regular feature that pre-dated West Coast Avengers by about ten years. They want to revive that. They asked me if I wanted to write it, or would let someone else write it. Well, I want to control the Titans; I think one of the problems with *Spotlight* was that I really didn't do any. I think that's the reason that it eventually got canceled. There was no sense of urgency to the stories, as good as some of them were. There was no sense of the stories having any effect on the characters. The fact that it lasted 25 issues, I think, is a testimony to the characters themselves—that people still cared about them."

"Cyborg will be moving to the West Coast. Red Star from Russia will be a member of it. Chris King, who is one of the Dial "H" for Hero character that I had done will be a member. So we actually have a character who, every time you see him, will be different."

In *Comics Scene Magazine* #8 [1989], plans for Titans West continued; Marv explains: "We'll probably do the first issue together whenever that finally comes about. Then, depending on George's schedule, he may take over the book. I didn't want another young superhero book," Wolfman notes. "The concept that I had come up with was more of a rescue group—not another bunch of policemen running out and stopping crime—working out of San Francisco. Just before George returned, I set up the San Francisco branch of STAR Labs as a place where they're testing super-people. We had Red Star and Thunder and Lightning out there, and some other characters that we were going to introduce. When the Titans West is formed, they'll operate out of that, and there will be positive charter in the helping in disastrous situations."

"Now that I'm coming back as a writer in my mind after a couple of years where I wasn't too pleased with everything, I don't want to overdose on Titans. I want to really enjoy what I'm writing so that each issue, when I sit down, I can approach it at the strongest, as opposed to saying, 'Oh, no. Another Titans story.' So, if George decides at some point not to write *Titans West*, at least it'll be so completely different from Titans that I wouldn't be bored."

The last mention of the series was in *Comics Scene* #11 in 1990: "Another Titans project is the often-mentioned Titans West series. Pérez says it's still planned. "One of the stories that Marv discussed was a mystery story in which the Titans are missing. That could lead to the introduction or reintroduction of the Titans West set of characters. Then, I would be the writer of the second Titans book if reader interest warrants it. It also depends on whether I have the time to write it, or if I would be better off on another title I could write and draw."

Flash to the present: Marv didn't recall why Titans West never took off, but he did remember some other ideas concerning the series: "All I remember on this, because it never got to the second stage, was that I designed the headquarters which was a street in San Francisco that was on a hill side. When you looked at the street from street level the houses all looked ordinary. When you looked at them from above—from the sky—the houses were in a T-shape, that is one row of houses at the head of the block and then a second row going perpendicular in the middle of the top row. So we would have maintained the T-shape headquarters but it would have looked like a typical San Francisco street. The HQ would have been a villain's nest, built deep into a mountain that the Titans took over." Titans West seems to be a team that can never hold itself together—both in print and outside of it.

**Games Titans Play**

At last, a happy ending. An unpublished Titans story that is finally seeing the light of day. Originally started back in 1989, this Titans Graphic Novel was a whopping 120-plus pages. George Pérez had finished penciling 70-something pages before hitting a creative wall.

George Pérez reflected on *Games* in the *George Pérez Newsletter* #1 in 2001: "In case of the Titans graphic novel it was George Pérez over-committed and couldn't finish the thing. While I was drawing the story a lot of things were happening in the regular series making the story moot. I'm the only person to blame for that book not coming out. No political hay could be made about that story, just one artist screwing up. I just over-committed myself."

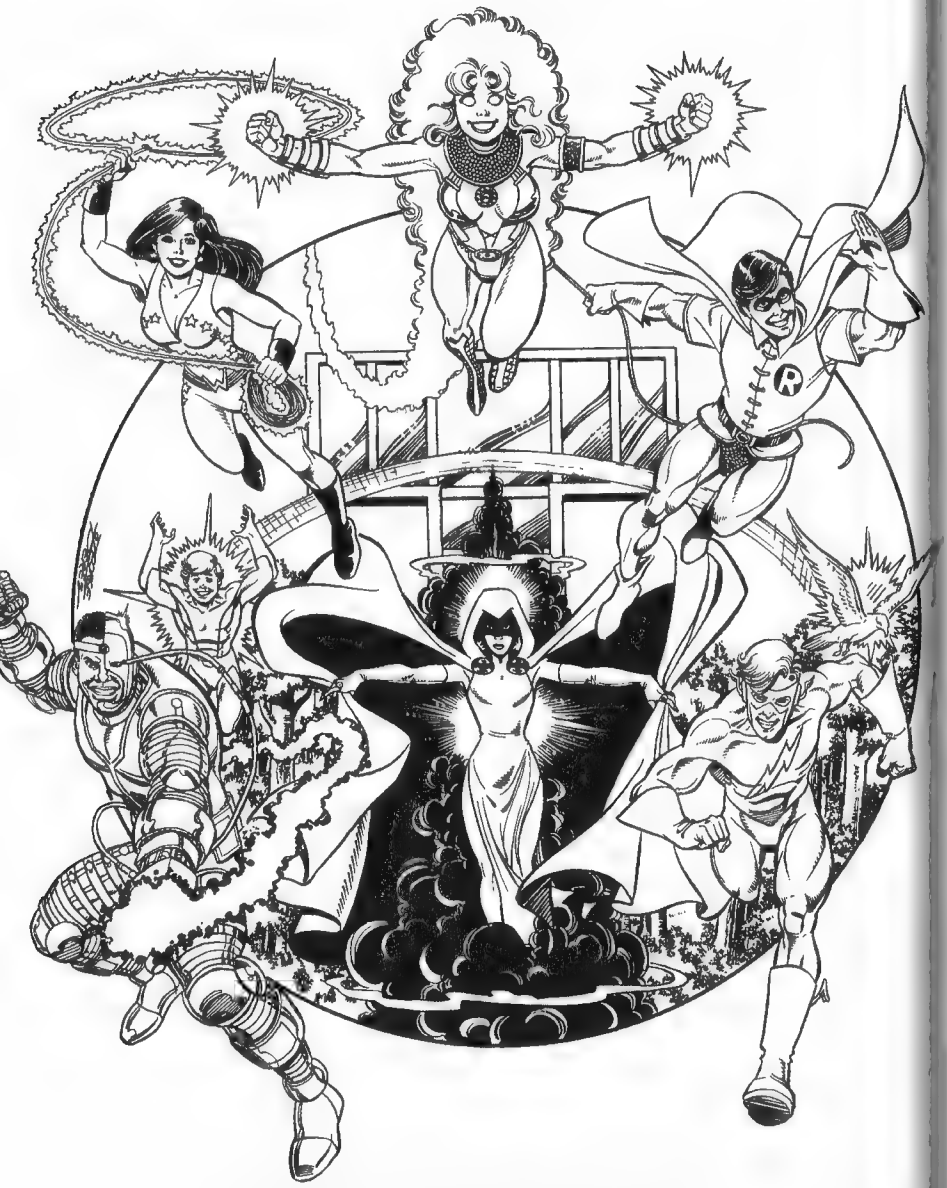
The book was fully plotted and more than half drawn; But as time passed, many elements of the story became dated—and many featured characters had been changed. The tale seemed doomed to the publishing scrap heap. But the renewed success of *Teen Titans* in 2003 made DC look at the Titans again.

Marv Wolfman tells the story of GAMES on his website, www.marvwolfman.com: "Cut to September, 2003. My wife, Noel and I, along with a number of friends, made our annual trek to the Los Angeles County Fair. Suddenly, my cell phone vibrated. I usually forward my home phone to my cell when I'm out. So I am in the middle of a very crowded exhibit hall when I answer the phone and it's George on the other side. "Marv," he says, "Would you be available if I call DC and say I'd like to finish drawing 'Games,' the Titans graphic novel?" The County Fair pigs, five buildings away, were blown out of their sties by my squeals of delight. "Games" will at last be published in time to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of George and my first issue of *The New Teen Titans* in 2005. All's right with the world."

Well said, Marv. So what about that X-Men/Teen Titans team-up?

# GEORGE PÉREZ GALLERY

You've made it this far... and finally we have one of our most popular features: the Gallery! We love being able to showcase some of George's rare, preliminary, unpublished, and popular pieces of art. Enjoy!



Here are two hard-to-find images of The Titans.

The top image is taken from the cover of Comics Interview #50.

The image to the left is a panel from the cover of Focus on George Pérez.

These next few pages showcase Pérez's drawings of Titans West Characters. This drawing appeared in New Teen Titans vol 2

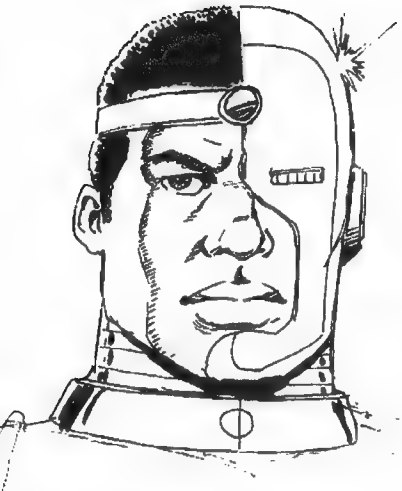
This "Who's Who" drawing of Bumblebee appeared in Secret Origins Annual #3.

This "Who's Who" drawing of Flamebird appeared in Secret Origins Annual #3.

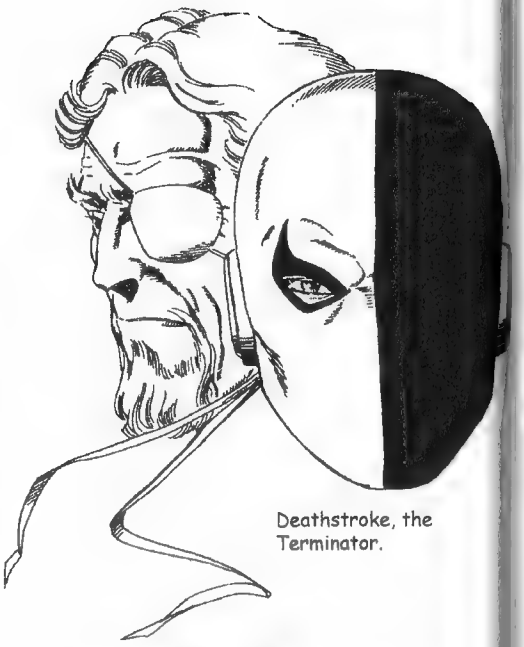
This "Who's Who" drawing of The Herald appeared in Secret Origins Annual #3.

This "Who's Who" drawing of Golden Eagle appeared in Secret Origins Annual #3. Special thanks to George Gustines for providing these pieces to us.

"Throwback," the cover for New Titans #56.



A convention sketch of Cyborg from 1999, benefiting the CBLDF.



Deathstroke, the Terminator.

This portrait of Argent in her original costume was drawn in 1997.

A convention sketch of Wonder Girl from 1997, benefiting the CBLDF.

We had originally considered using this as the cover, so we had to include this awesome piece in the gallery!

This piece, used for the 1996 Heroes Convention book cover, was drawn by George Pérez, Dan Jurgens and Nick Cardy, and inked by Pérez.

Here are George's character designs for Jericho.

This awesome art is the cover for the "Fire and Ice" Role-Playing-Game module, featuring the Fearsome Five.

Cover art for the 1982 Heroes Convention book.

George can always be relied upon to draw "his girls" how they should look... or in the case of Troia here, how she might have looked!

Thanks to Erik Merk for providing this image.

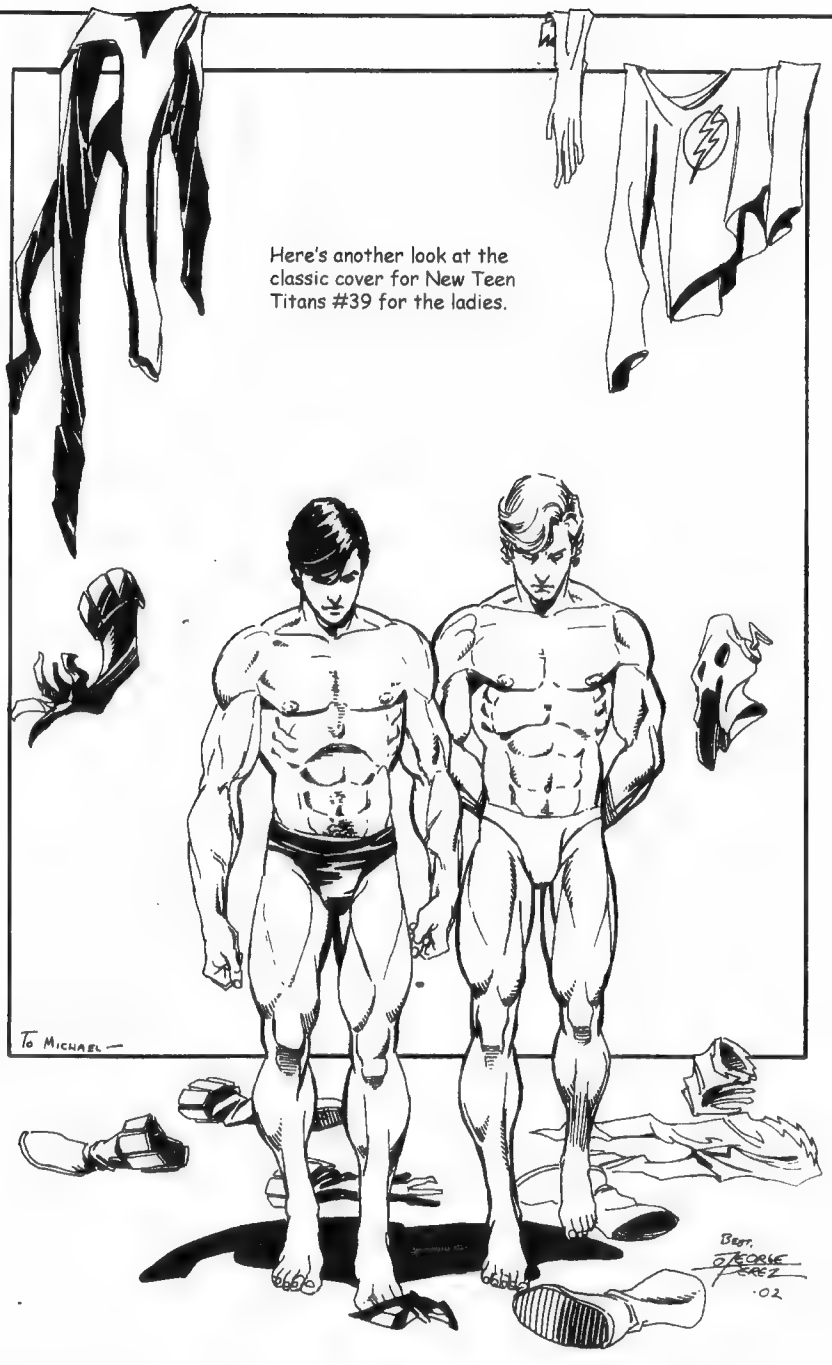
THERE WILL BE FOOD AND DRINK GALORE, BUT BEFORE THAT, AND BEFORE THE FIRST DANCE--I HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF INTRODUCING THE BRIDAL PARTY!
JENNIFER AND ADAM
CINDY AND BARRY JR...
SHARON AND HOWARD..
LILITH AND SAMUEL...
KORY AND RANDOLPH...
DIANA AND BARRY.
AND NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME AS MAN AND--I MEAN, HUSBAND AND WIFE--LET'S HEAR IT FOR TERRY AND DONNA!
THE FIRST DANCE, OR FOREVER KNOWN AS--"OUR SONG"!
READY, HONEY?
I CAN'T WAIT.
LET'S GO DO IT!
24

Erik Merk kindly provided this art for inclusion in the gallery.

This drawing of Prysm and Risk was drawn by our own production manager, Marcus Mébes, and inked by George Pérez!

This image has been seen before, but never in its original crystal clarity (prior to being painted)! The coloring that was used changed the appearance dramatically from the original drawing. Special thanks to Andy Mangels for digging up this treasure for us to share with you!

Cheesecake is always appreciated!


Here's another look at the classic cover for New Teen Titans #39 for the ladies.
To Michael —
Best,
George Perez
'02

The cover from New Titans #130, the final issue of the series. It is actually an homage to his original cover design for the first issue some sixteen years earlier!

This is an unused cover for a Heroes convention booklet.

This was used as a promotional image for the second Teen Titans series from 1996.

George was involved in more issues of the *Teen Titan* than any other magazine. As a whole, considering all the series, that makes 146 issues.

Another promotional image for the 1996 Teen Titans series.

And to finish up the gallery, the gratuitous beefcake!

# GEORGE PÉREZ TRIBUTE GALLERY

For a change, this issue we'd like to present some Titanic drawings by professionals. Most of these are unpublished, so be prepared for a treat!

Nick Cardy drew this series of Portraits for Bill Walko.

Ralph Ramil Mendoza drew this piece especially for this issue of PACESETTER since he didn't get a drawing done in time for last issue's theme.

Bill Walko provided several of the pieces in this gallery, including this one of Deathstroke the Terminator by Steve Erwin....

and this drawing of Terra by Kevin Maguire.

Steve Cariello drew this powerful portrait of Slade Wilson for Bill in 2003.

This stunning, stylized drawing of Kole was drawn by Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez.

Luciano Vecchio took time out of his busy schedule to draw this group picture of Pérez-created Titans characters.

This team shot was drawn by Greg Woronchak earlier this year.

Nick Derrington's (Savage Dragon-Savage Tales) Speedy sketch from Dallas in 2003.

New Aquaman artist Pat Gleason's rendition of Tempest from 2003.

And last, but certainly not least, we have this gorgeous drawing of Troia by Phil Jimenez, which was graciously provided to us by Royd Burgoyne of Australia.

# NEWS and EVENTS

**SOJOURN / LADY DEATH #1 (of 2)**
May 2004 • $2.95
CrossGen Comics
Comic Book (22 pages)
writer: Brian Pulido/Chuck Dixon
penciller: George Pérez
inker: Tom Ryder

**NEW TEEN TITANS ARCHIVES #2**
May 2004 •$49.95
DC Comics
"Like Puppets On A String"/"Promethium Unbound"/"When Titans Clash"/"Clash Of The Titans"/"Friends And Foes Alike"/"Revolution"/"The Brotherhood Of Evil Lives Again"/"Starfire Unleashed"/"The Possessing of Francis Kane"/"Reunion!" (240 pages)
writer: Marv Wolfman
pencils: George Pérez
inker: Romeo Tanghal

**PITTSBURGH COMICON 2004**
April 30 - May 2, 2004
Pittsburgh Expomart - Monroeville, PA
www.pittsburghcomicon.com

**UNCANNY DAVE COCKRUM TRIBUTE #1**
Jun 2004
$25.00
www.aardwolfpublishing.com
Benefit book for Dave Cockrum, pinup by George Pérez

**BACK ISSUE #5**
July 2004
$5.95
TwoMorrows
Magazine (100 pages)
Featuring a Linda Carter as Wonder Woman pinup by George Pérez

Don't forget to check out **The Artist's Choice** website for original George Pérez art, as well as the works of many other artists!

**www.theartistschoice.com** • You'll be glad you did!

For ALL things TITANS, the best online resource for news, archives, art and history is **www.titanstower.com.**
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# PACESETTER The George Pérez Magazine

*Your comments are always welcome!*

Tony,

Three must be your lucky number. I thought this issue was on par with the *George Pérez Newsletter* #3 (*Crimson Plague*) Issue. The issue came out at the perfect time. It made the wait for the delayed *JLA/Avengers* #4 a little more bearable. You should have called it *Pacesetter* 3.5 and made a unofficial tie-in to the crossover. I'm sure DC and MARVEL wouldn't have minded. I really enjoyed all the pro interviews. It's one of the things I liked most about the magazine. I love behind the scenes info and the creative process that goes into creating the final product. As a have said before I think you are becoming a better interviewer as each issue passes.

I'm glad you have decided to do something in honor of George's 30th Year in the Comic Book Biz. It looks like 2004 will be will the year of George Pérez. Reuniting with Marv Wolfman on *Titans "Games"*, *JLA/Avengers* #4 released, *Wonder Woman* TPB released with new covers and additional material and a CrossGen miniseries. All on top of George's 30th Celebration. It's a good time to be a fan George Pérez fan!

I am looking forward to three issues of the *Pacesetter* this year! I am still keeping my fingers crossed for new or never before seen original covers.

Best,
Eric Sellers

*Thanks for the nice words. We are all ways trying to improve. The year 2004 will be another big year for George and* Pacesetter. *This year will mark the first cover done especially for* Pacesetter, *so there are a lot of exciting things to come.*

• • •

Tony,

I just wanted to drop a line to commend you on the job you've been doing with *Pacesetter*. Keep it up and you'll have a chronicle of George's career to match *Kirby Collector*. This issue with its theme of Avengers/JLA, which I just picked up yesterday, was especially nice.

J.A. Fludd

The Kirby Collector *is the magazine that pushed me over the edge on finally publishing my magazine. If you haven't checked it out, you don't know what you are missing, J.A. has written articles for* Kirby Collector. *Look for an article by J.A. in the 30th Anniversary issue.*

• • •

Tony,

The interviews were incredible. It's so nice to hear from the creators how they work, what they were thinking with the projects, and all of the little issues that crop up when working on a project of this magnitude. I found it interesting that Mr. Pérez hasn't really been reading comics much and had concerns with that aspect of drawing the characters. Kurt Busiek is quite simply a god among men where writing is concerned. Your interviews cut to the chase and gave great insight into a project that has been so highly anticipated probably since the Avengers and JLA first graced the pages of a comic book.

Gary Beck

• • •

Tony,

Thanks for my copy of *Pacesetter* #3! I've gone through most of it, and I've enjoyed it quite a bit: insightful interviews, interesting articles, and great unseen art (like the Iron Man and Beast trading card art). Keep up the great work.

Ilke Hincer

*Ilke has been one of my biggest supporters from the very beginning, and I want to thank him for that. Ilke mentions the rare unseen art. Well I can always use more! If you any art by George (commission art, convention sketches, original pages, etc....) please send me good quality photocopies. You can send high res scans to me at TLorenzP@yahoo.com , Tiff or Jpeg format preferred, at a minimum of 400 dpi. If sending me photocopies please put name and contact info on the back of each page so I know who to give credit to.*

Your comments, concerns, question and feedback are greatly appreciated. If you have some ideas on how to improve the magazine, if you have a complaint, if you have a request, or if you just want to share some thoughts, email Tony at TLorenzP@yahoo.com.

# Back issues of The George Pérez Newsletter and Pacesetter are still available!

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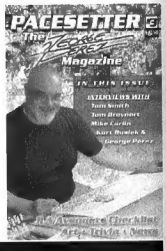


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The purpose of *Pacesetter, The George Pérez Magazine* is to provide a venue to display the incredible art of this exceptional artist, and to make available for perusal new interviews and insightful articles regarding Mr. Pérez, as well as to showcase artwork and talent inspired by his work.

The staff of *Pacesetter* strives to provide the most excellent product that we are capable of, and we welcome comments and criticisms. We make no claims to expertise, so if you find an error or discrepancy, please notify us and we will amend it in the next issue.

We at *Pacesetter* thank you for purchasing this special endeavor. We hope you'll be with us for future issues.